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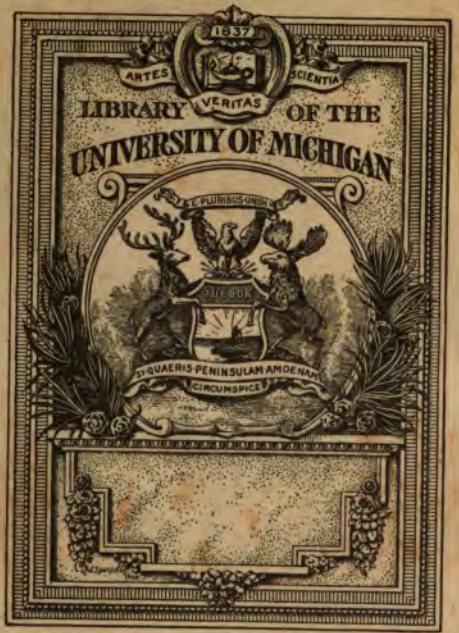
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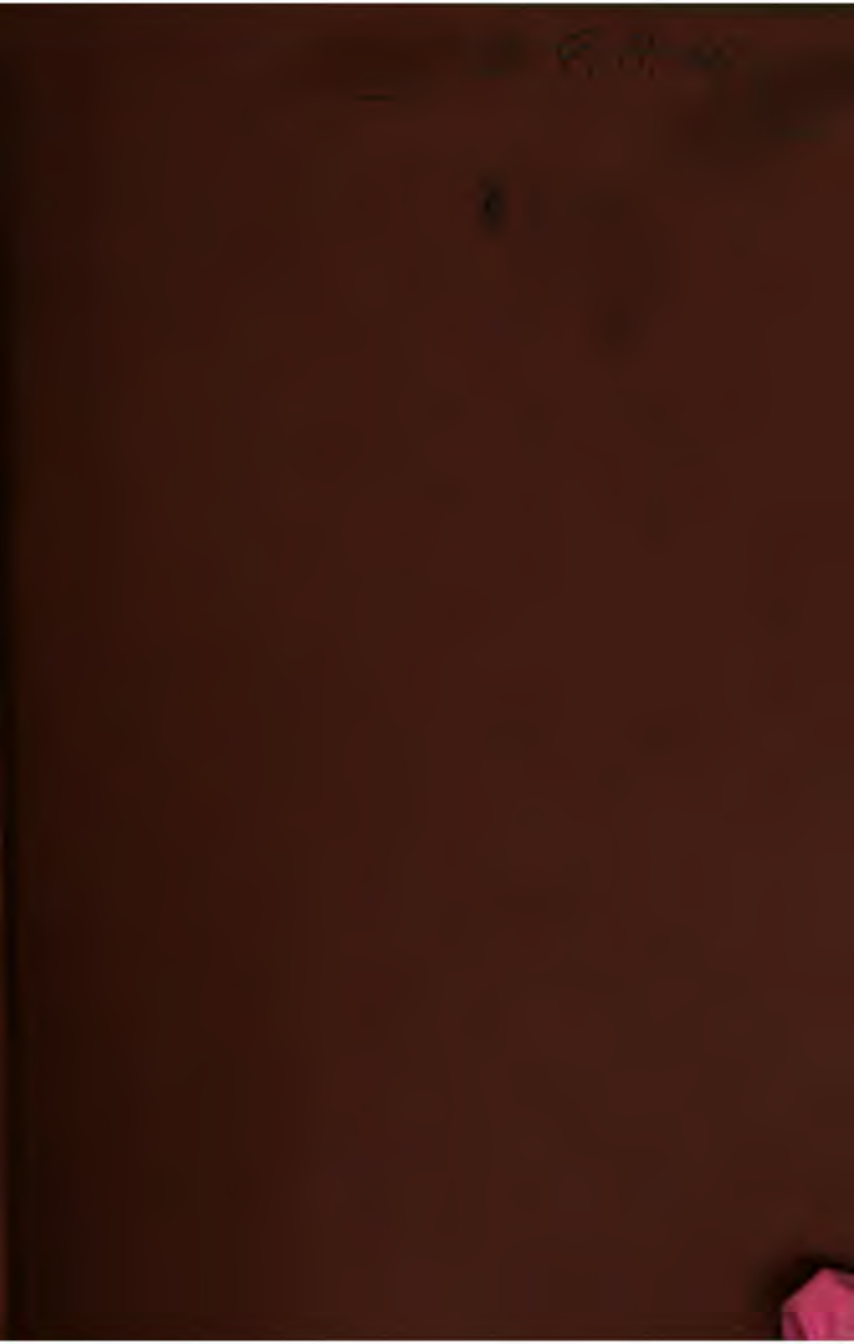

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MEMOIRS OF THE LIFE

OF

SIR WALTER SCOTT, BART.

2672

MEMOIRS OF THE LIFE

OF

SIR WALTER SCOTT, BART.

BY

JOHN GIBSON LOCKHART.

A NEW EDITION.

VOL. VII.

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MEMOIRS

OF THE

LIFE OF SIR WALTER SCOTT.

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1824.

IMMEDIATELY on the conclusion of St. Ronan's Well, Sir Walter began the novel of *Redgauntlet;* — but it had made considerable progress at press before Constable and Ballantyne could persuade him to substitute that title for *Herries*. The book was published in June 1824, and was received at the time somewhat coldly, though it has since, I believe, found more justice. The reintroduction of the adventurous hero of 1745, in the dulness and dimness of advancing age, and fortunes hopelessly blighted — and the presenting him — with whose romantic portraiture at an earlier period histori-

cal truth had been so admirably blended — as the moving principle of events, not only entirely, but notoriously imaginary — this was a rash experiment, and could not fail to suggest many disagreeable and disadvantageous comparisons; yet, had there been no Waverley, I am persuaded the fallen and faded Ascanius of Redgauntlet would have been universally pronounced a masterpiece. About the secondary personages there could be little ground for controversy. What novel or drama has surpassed the grotesquely ludicrous, dashed with the profound pathos, of Peter Peebles — the most tragic of farces? — or the still sadder merriment of that human shipwreck, Nantie Ewart? — or Wandering Willie and his Tale? — the wildest and most rueful of dreams told by such a person, and in such a dialect! Of the young correspondents Darsie Latimer and Allan Fairford, and the Quakers of Mount Sharon, and indeed of numberless minor features in Redgauntlet, no one who has read the first part of these Memoirs will expect me to speak at length here. With posterity assuredly this novel will yield in interest to none of the series; for it contains perhaps more of the author's personal experiences than any other of them, or even than all the rest put together.

This year, — *mirabile dictu!* — produced but one novel; and it is not impossible that the author had taken deeply into his mind, though he would not *immediately* act upon them, certain hints about the danger of "overcropping," which have been alluded to as dropping from his publishers in 1823. He had, however, a labour of some weight to go through in preparing for the press a Second Edition of his voluminous Swift. The additions to this reprint were numerous, and he

corrected his notes, and the Life of the Dean throughout, with considerable care. He also threw off several reviews and other petty miscellanies — among which last occurs his memorable tribute to the memory of Lord Byron, written for Ballantyne's newspaper immediately after the news of the catastrophe at Missolonghi reached Abbotsford.*

The arrangement of his library and museum was, however, the main care of the summer months of this year; and his woods were now in such a state of progress that his most usual exercise out of doors was thinning them. He was an expert as well as powerful wielder of the axe, and competed with his ablest subalterns as to the paucity of blows by which a tree could be brought down. The wood rang ever and anon with laughter while he shared their labours; and if he had taken, as he every now and then did, a whole day with them, they were sure to be invited home to Abbotsford to sup gaily at Tom Purdie's. One of Sir Walter's Transatlantic admirers, by the way, sent him a complete assortment of the tools employed in clearing the Backwoods, and both he and Tom made strenuous efforts to attain some dexterity in using them; but neither

* See *Miscellaneous Prose Works*, (Edin. Ed.) — Mr. Andrew Shortrede, who was in 1824 learning the printing business in Edinburgh, says — "Sir Walter came down from the Court of Session to the printing-office the day the intelligence of Byron's death reached Edinburgh, and there dictated to James Ballantyne the article which appeared in the Weekly Journal. I think it was inserted without correction, or revisal, except by Ballantyne. From these circumstances, I with others imagined James had himself produced it in some moment of inspiration; but when I afterwards told him how I had been misled, he detailed *suo more* the full, true, and particular history of the article. Separate copies, I remember, were thrown off for some of Byron's friends." — [1839.]

succeeded. The American axe, in particular, having a longer shaft than ours, and a much smaller and narrower cutting-piece, was, in Tom's opinion, only fit for paring a *kebbuck* (*i. e.* a cheese of skimmed milk.) The old-fashioned large and broad axe was soon resumed; and the belt that bore it had accommodation also for a chisel, a hammer, and a small saw. Among all the numberless portraits, why was there not one representing the "Belted Knight," accoutred with these appurtenances of his forest-craft, jogging over the heather on a breezy morning, with Thomas Purdie at his stirrup, and Maida stalking in advance?

Notwithstanding the numberless letters to Terry about his upholstery, the far greater part of it was manufactured at home. The most of the articles from London were only models for the use of two or three neat-handed carpenters whom he had discovered in the villages near him: and he watched and directed their operations as carefully as a George Bullock could have done; and the results were such as even Bullock might have admired. The great table in the library, for example (a most complex and beautiful one), was done entirely in the room where it now stands, by Joseph Shillinglaw of Darnick — the Sheriff planning and studying every turn as zealously as ever an old lady pondered the development of an embroidered cushion. The hangings and curtains, too, were chiefly the work of a little hunch-backed tailor, by name *William* Goodfellow — (save at Abbotsford, where he answered to *Robin*) — who occupied a cottage on Scott's farm of the Broomielees; one of the race who creep from homestead to homestead, welcomed wherever they appear by housewife and handmaiden, the great gossips and newsmen of the parish, — in Scottish no-

menclature *cardooers*. Proudly and earnestly did all these vassals toil in his service; and I think it was one of them that, when some stranger asked a question about his personal demeanour, answered in these simple words — "Sir Walter speaks to every man as if they were blood-relations." Not long after he had completed his work at Abbotsford, little Goodfellow fell sick, and as his cabin was near Chiefswood, I had many opportunities of observing the Sheriff's kind attention to him in his affliction. I can never forget the evening on which the poor tailor died. When Scott entered the hovel he found everything silent, and inferred from the looks of the good women in attendance that their patient had fallen asleep, and that they feared his sleep was the final one. He murmured some syllables of kind regret; — at the sound of his voice the dying tailor unclosed his eyes, and eagerly and wistfully sat up, clasping his hands with an expression of rapturous gratefulness and devotion, that, in the midst of deformity, disease, pain, and wretchedness, was at once beautiful and sublime. He cried with a loud voice, "the Lord bless and reward you!" and expired with the effort.

In the painting of his interior, too, Sir Walter personally directed everything. He abominated the commonplace daubing of walls, panels, doors, and window-boards, with coats of white, blue, or grey, and thought that sparklings and edgings of gilding only made their baldness and poverty more noticeable. He desired to have about him, wherever he could manage it, rich, though not gaudy, hangings, or substantial old-fashioned wainscot-work, with no ornament but that of carving; and where the wood was to be painted at all, it was done in strict imitation of oak or cedar. Except in the drawing-room, which he

abandoned to Lady Scott's taste, all the roofs were in appearance of antique carved oak, relieved by coats-of-arms duly blazoned at the intersections of beams, and resting on cornices to the eye of the same material, but really composed of casts in plaster of Paris, after the foliage, the flowers, the grotesque monsters and dwarfs, and sometimes the beautiful heads of nuns and confessors, on which he had doated from infancy among the cloisters of Melrose and Roslin. In the painting of these things, also, he had instruments who considered it as a labour of love. The master-limner, in particular, had a devoted attachment to his person; and this was not wonderful, for he, in fact, owed a prosperous fortune to Scott's kind and sagacious counsel tendered at the very outset of his career. A printer's apprentice attracted notice by his attempts with the pencil, and Sir Walter was called upon, after often admiring his skill in representing dogs and horses and the like, to assist him with his advice, as ambition had been stirred, and the youth would fain give himself to the regular training of an artist. Scott took him into his room, and conversed with him at some length. He explained the difficulties and perils, the almost certain distresses, the few and narrow chances of this aspiring walk. He described the hundreds of ardent spirits that pine out their lives in solitary garrets, lamenting over the rash eagerness with which they had obeyed the suggestions of young ambition, and chosen a career in which success of any sort is rare, and no success but the highest is worth attaining. "You have talents and energy," said he, "but who can say whether you have genius? These boyish drawings can never be relied on as proofs of *that*. If you feel within you such a glow of ambition, that you would rather run a hundred chances

of obscurity and penury, than miss *one* of being a Wilkie, — make up your mind, and take the bold plunge; but if your object is merely to raise yourself to a station of worldly comfort and independence, — if you would fain look forward with tolerable assurance to the prospect of being a respectable citizen, with your own snug roof over your head, and the happy faces of a wife and children about you, — pause and reflect well. It appears to me that there is little demand for fine works of the pencil in this country. Not a few artists, who have even obtained high reputation, find employment scarce, and starve under their laurels. I think profit in Britain is, with very rare exceptions, annexed to departments of obvious and direct utility, in which the mass of the people are concerned; and it has often struck me, that some clever fellow might make a good hit, if, in place of enrolling himself among the future Raphaels and Vandykes of the Royal Academy, he should resolutely set himself to introducing something of a more elegant style of house-painting." The young man thus addressed (Mr. D. R. Hay) was modest and wise enough to accept the advice with thankfulness, and to act upon it. After a few years he had qualified himself to take charge of all this delicate limning and blazoning at Abbotsford. He is now, I understand, at the head of a great and flourishing establishment in Edinburgh; and a treatise on the Science of Colour, which has proceeded from his pen, is talked of as reflecting high credit on his taste and understanding. Nor should I omit what seems a particularly honourable trait in Mr. Hay: — he is said to be one of the most liberal patrons of native art now in existence; in fact, to possess an unrivalled collection of the works of contemporary Scottish painters.

Meantime, the progress of Abbotsford stimulated largely both friends and strangers to contribute articles of curiosity towards its final adornment. I have already alluded with regret to the non-completion of the Poet's own catalogue of his literary and antiquarian rarities, begun under the title of "Reliquiæ Trottcosianæ," and mentioned Mr. Train, the affectionate Supervisor of Excise, as the most unwearied and bountiful of all the contributors to the *Museum*. Now, he would fain have his part in the substantial "*plenishing*" also; and I transcribe, as a specimen of his zeal, the account which I have received from himself of the preparation and transmission of one piece of furniture, to which his friend allotted a distinguished place, for it was one of the *two* chairs that ultimately stood in his own *sanctum sanctorum*. In those days Mr. Train's official residence was at Kirkintilloch, in Stirlingshire; and he says, in his *Memoranda*, —

"Rarbiston, or, as it is now called, Robroyston, where the valiant Wallace was betrayed by Monteith of Ruskie, is only a few miles distant from Kirkintilloch. The walls of the house where the first scene of that disgraceful tragedy was acted, were standing on my arrival in that quarter. The roof was entirely gone; but I observed that some butts of the rafters, built into the wall, were still remaining. As the ruin was about being taken down to make way for the ploughshare, I easily succeeded in purchasing these old stumps from the farmer upon whose ground it stood. When taken out of the building, these pieces of wood were seemingly so much decayed as to be fit only for fuel; but after planing off about an inch from the surface, I found that the remainder of the wood was as hard as a bone, and susceptible of a fine polish. I then resolved upon having a chair of the most antique description made out of these wasted blocks, as a memorial of our most patriotic hero, with a feeling somewhat similar to theirs who remember their Saviour in the crucifix.

"In the execution of this undertaking, workmen of various denominations were employed. It was modelled from an old chair in the Palace of Hamilton, and is nearly covered with carved work, representing rocks, heather, and thistles, emblematic of Scotland, and indented with brass, representing the *Harp of the North*, surrounded with laurels, and supported by targets, claymores, Lochaber axes, war horns, &c. The seat is covered with silk velvet, beneath which is a drawer, containing a book bound in the most primitive form in Robroyston wood, with large clasps. In this book are detailed at length some of the particulars here briefly alluded to, with the affirmations of several persons to whose care the chair was entrusted in the course of making.

"On the (inside) back of the chair is a brass plate, bearing the following inscription: —

THIS CHAIR,
MADE OF THE ONLY REMAINING WOOD
OF THE
HOUSE AT ROBROYSTON,
IN WHICH THE
MATCHLESS SIR WILLIAM WALLACE
'WAS DONE TO DEATH BY FELON HAND
FOR GUARDING WELL HIS FATHERS' LAND,'
IS MOST RESPECTFULLY PRESENTED TO
SIR WALTER SCOTT,
AS A SMALL TOKEN OF GRATITUDE
BY HIS DEVOTED SERVANT,
JOSEPH TRAIN.

"Exaggerated reports of this chair spread over the adjacent country with a fiery-cross-like speed, and raised public curiosity to such a height, that persons in their own carriages came many miles to see it. I happened to be in a distant part of my district at the time; but I daresay many persons in Kirkintilloch yet remember how triumphantly the symbolic chair was borne from my lodgings to the bank of the Great Canal, to be there shipped for Abbotsford, in the midst of the town-band play-

ing 'Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled,' and surrounded by thousands, who made the welkin resound with bursts of national enthusiasm, justifying the couplet of Pope —

> 'All this may be, the people's voice is odd;
> The Scots will fight for Wallace as for God.' "

Such arrivals as that of "the Wallace Chair" were frequent throughout 1824. It was a happy, and therefore it need hardly be added an ineventful year — his last year of undisturbed prosperity. The little incidents that diversified his domestic interior, and the zeal which he always kept up for all the concerns of his friends, together with a few indications of his opinions on subjects of literary and political interest, will be found in his correspondence, which will hardly require any editorial explanations.

Within, I think, the same week in January, arrived a copy of Montfaucon's Antiquities, in fifteen volumes folio, richly bound in scarlet, the gift of King George IV., and a set of the Variorum Classics, in a hundred and forty volumes octavo, from Mr. Constable. Sir Walter says —

"*To Archibald Constable, Esq.*

"Abbotsford, 6th January 1824.

"My Dear Sir, — Yesterday I had the great pleasure of placing in my provisional library the most splendid present, as I in sincerity believe, which ever an author received from a bookseller. In the shape of these inimitable *Variorums*, who knows what new ideas the Classics may suggest? — for I am determined to shake off the rust which years have contracted, and to read at least some of the most capital of the ancients before I die. Believe me, my dear and old friend, I set a more especial value on this work as coming from you, and as being

a pledge that the long and confidential intercourse betwixt us has been agreeable and advantageous to both. — Yours truly,

"WALTER SCOTT."

Miss Edgeworth had written to him to inquire about the health of his eldest daughter, and told him some anecdotes of an American dame, whose head had been turned by the Waverley Novels, and who had, among other demonstrations of enthusiasm, called her farm in Massachusetts, *Charlie's Hope*. This lady had, it seems, corresponded with Mrs. Grant of Laggan, herself for a time one of the "Authors of Waverley," and Mrs. Grant, in disclaiming such honours, had spoken of the real source, in terms of such perfect assurance, that the honest American almost fancied her friend must have heard Scott confess; yet still she was in doubts and tribulations, and unhappy till she could hear more. The theory prevalent in her own neighbourhood was, it seems, that the authorship was a joint-stock business — Sir Walter being one of the partners, and the other an unfortunate lunatic, of whose papers he had got possession during a lucid interval. Scott answers thus: —

"*To Miss Edgeworth, Edgeworthstown, Ireland.*

"Parliament House, 3d Feb. 1824.

"My Dear Miss Edgeworth, — I answer your kind letter immediately, because I am sure your sisters and you will interest yourselves in Sophia's state of health. My news are not of the best —

'Yet not so ill, but may be well reported.'

On Saturday, 31st January, she had a daughter, but the poor little stranger left us on the Monday following; and though Sophia is very patient in her temper, yet her recovery is

naturally retarded, and I am sorry to say she has been attacked in her weak state by those spasms which seem a hereditary disorder in my family, — slightly, however, in comparison of the former occasion; and for the last two days she has been so much recovered as to take a grain or two of calomel, which is specific in the complaint. I have no doubt now, humanly speaking, that her recovery will proceed favourably. I saw her for a quarter of an hour yesterday, which was the first *permanent* visit I have been permitted to make her. So you may conceive we have been anxious enough, living, as is our clannish fashion, very much for and with each other.

"Your American friend, the good-wife of Charlie's Hope, seems disposed, as we say, 'to sin her mercies.' She quarrels with books that amuse her, because she does not know the author; and she gives up chicken-pie for the opposite reason, that she knows too much about the birds' pedigree. On the last point I share her prejudices, and never could eat the flesh of any creature I had known while alive. I had once a noble yoke of oxen, which, with the usual agricultural gratitude, we killed for the table; they said it was the finest beef in the four counties, but I could never taste Gog and Magog, whom I used to admire in the plough. Moreover, when I was an officer of yeomanry, and used to dress my own charger, I formed an acquaintance with a flock of white turkeys, by throwing them a handful of oats now and then when I came from the stable: — I saw their numbers diminish with real pain, and never attempted to eat any of them without being sick. And yet I have as much of the *rugged and tough* about me as is necessary to carry me through all sorts of duty without much sentimental compunction.

"As to the ingenious system of double authorship, which the Americans have devised for the Waverley novels, I think it in one point of view extremely likely; since the unhappy man, whom they have thought fit to bring on the carpet, has been shut up in a madhouse for many years; and it seems probable that no brain but a madman's could have invented so much stuff, and no leisure but that of a prisoner could have afforded

time to write it all. But, if this poor man be the author of these works, I can assure your kind friend that I neither could, would, nor durst have the slightest communication with him on that or any other subject. In fact, I have never heard of him twice for these twenty years or more. As for honest Mrs. Grant, I cannot conceive why the deuce I should have selected her for a mother-confessor; if it had been yourself, or Joanna, there might have been some probability in the report; but good Mrs. Grant is so very cerulean, and surrounded by so many fetch-and-carry mistresses and misses, and the maintainer of such an unmerciful correspondence, that though I would do her any kindness in my power, yet I should be afraid to be very intimate with a woman whose tongue and pen are rather overpowering. She is an excellent person notwithstanding. Pray, make my respects to your correspondent, and tell her I am very sorry I cannot tell her who the author of Waverley is; but I hope she will do me the justice not to ascribe any dishonourable transactions to me, either in that matter or any other, until she hears that they are likely to correspond with any part of my known character — which, having been now a lion of good reputation on my own deserts for twenty years and upwards, ought to be indifferently well known in Scotland. She seems to be a very amiable person; and though I shall never see Charlie's Hope, or eat her chicken-pies, I am sure I wish health to wait on the one, and good digestion on the other. They are funny people the Americans: I saw a paper in which they said my father was a tailor. If he had been an *honest tailor*, I should not have been ashamed of the circumstance; but he was what may be thought as great a phenomenon, for he was an *honest lawyer*, a cadet of a good family, whose predecessors only dealt in pinking and slashing doublets, not in making them.

"Here is a long letter, and all about trash — but what can you expect? Judges are mumbling and grumbling above me — lawyers are squabbling and babbling around me. The minutes I give to my letter are stolen from Themis. I hope to get to Abbotsford very soon, though only for two or three

days, until 12th March, when we go there for some time. Mrs. Spicie seems to be recovering from her asthmatics, which makes a curious case, providing the recovery be completed. Walter came down at Christmas, and speedily assembled three more terriers. One day the whole got off after a hare, and made me remember the basket beagles that Lord Morton used to keep in my youth; for the whole pack opened like hounds, and would have stuck to the chase till they had killed the hare, which would have been like being pricked to death with pins, if we had not licked them off so soon as we could for laughing. This is a dull joke on paper; but imagine the presumption of so many long-backed, short-legged creatures pursuing an animal so very fleet. You will allow it is something ridiculous. I am sure Count O'Halloran would have laughed, and Colonel Heathcock would have been scandalized.* Lady S. sends her best and kindest remembrances, in which she is joined by Anne and Sophia (poor body). My fair friends, Harriet and Sophia, have a large interest in this greeting, and Lockhart throws himself in with tidings that Sophia continues to mend. — Always, my dear Miss E., most faithfully yours, WALTER SCOTT."

This is the answer to a request concerning some MS. tragedy, by the late Mrs. Hemans, which seems to have been damned at one of the London theatres, and then to have been tried over again (I know not with what result) at Edinburgh: —

"*To Miss Joanna Baillie, Hampstead.*

"Edinburgh, February 9, 1824.

"My Dear Miss Baillie, — To hear is to obey, and the enclosed line will show that the Siddonses are *agreeable* to act Mrs. Hemans's drama. When you tell the tale say nothing

* See "The Absentee," in Miss Edgeworth's *Tales of Fashionable Life*.

about me, for on no earthly consideration would I like it to be known that I interfered in theatrical matters; — it brings such a torrent of applications which it is impossible to grant, and often very painful to refuse. Everybody thinks they can write blank verse — and *a word of yours to Mrs. Siddons*, &c. &c. I had one rogue (to be sure he went mad afterwards, poor fellow) who came to bully me in my own house, until he had almost made the mist of twenty years, as Ossian says, roll backwards from my spirit, in which case he might have come by an excellent good beating. I have great pleasure, however, in serving Mrs. Hemans, both on account of her own merit, and because of your patronage. I trust the piece will succeed; but there is no promising, for Saunders is meanly jealous of being thought less critical than John Bull, and may, perhaps, despise to be pleased with what was less fortunate in London. I wish Mrs. H. had been on the spot to make any alterations, &c., which the players are always demanding. I will read the drama over more carefully than I have yet done, and tell you if anything occurs. I need hardly apologize for being late in letting you hear all this — for the terror of the cramp attacking poor Sophia in her weak state kept us very feverish; but thank God it did little more than menace her, and the symptoms having now given way, her husband talks of going to town, in which case I intend to take Sophia to Abbotsford, and

> 'Till she be fat as a Norroway seal,
> I'll feed her on bannocks of barleymeal.' *

"Betwixt indolence of her own, and Lockhart's extreme anxiety and indulgence, she has foregone the custom of her exercise, to which, please God, we will bring her back by degrees. Little Charles is come down, just entered at Brazen Nose, where, however, he does not go to reside till October. We must see that he fills up the space between to good advan-

* Old Ballad.

tage; he had always quickness enough to learn, and seems now really to have caught the

——'fever of renown,
Spread from the strong contagion of the gown.' *

"I am sorry for Mr. Crabbe's complaint, under which he suffered, I recollect, when he was here in 1822. Did you ever make out how he liked his Scottish tour? He is not, you know, very *outspoken*, and I was often afraid that he was a little tired by the bustle around him. At another time I would have made a point of attending more to his comforts — but what was to be done amid piping, and drumming, and pageants, and provosts, and bailies, and wild Highlandmen by the score? The time would have been more propitious to a younger poet. The fertility you mention is wonderful, but surely he must correct a great deal to bring his verses into the terse and pointed state in which he gives them to the public. — To come back to Mrs. Hemans. I am afraid that I cannot flatter myself with much interest that can avail her. I go so little out, and mix so seldom either with the gay or the literary world here, that I am reduced, like Gil Blas, much to the company of my brother clerks and men of business — a seclusion which I cannot say I regret greatly; but anything within my power shall not be left undone. I hope you will make my apology to Mrs. Hemans for the delay which has taken place; if anything should occur essential to be known to the authoress, I will write immediately. — Always yours, my dear friend, WALTER SCOTT."

In the next letter Scott mentions an application from Mr. James Montgomery for some contribution to a miscellaneous volume, compiled by that benevolent poet, for the benefit of the little chimney-sweeps.

* Johnson's *Vanity of Human Wishes.*

"*To Miss Baillie, Hampstead.*

"Edinburgh, Feb. 12, 1824.

"My Dearest Friend, — I hasten to answer your kind enquiries about Sophia. You would learn from my last that she was in a fair way of recovery, and I am happy to say she continues so well that we have no longer any apprehensions on her account. She will soon get into her sitting-room again, and of course have good rest at night, and gather strength gradually. I have been telling her that her face, which was last week the size of a sixpence, has in three or four days attained the diameter of a shilling, and will soon attain its natural and most extensive circumference of half-a-crown. If we live till 12th of next month we shall all go to Abbotsford, and between the black doctor and the red nurse (pony and cow, videlicet) I trust she will be soon well again. As for little Johnnie I have no serious apprehensions, being quite of your mind that his knowingness is only a proof that he is much with grown-up people; the child is active enough, and I hope will do well — yet an only child is like a blot at backgammon, and fate is apt to hit it. I am particularly entertained with your answer to Montgomery, because it happened to be precisely the same with mine: he applied to me for a sonnet or an elegy, instead of which I sent him an account of a manner of constructing chimneys so as scarcely to contract soot; and 2dly, of a very simple and effectual machine for sweeping away what soot does adhere. In all the new part of Abbotsford I have lined the chimney-vents with a succession of cones made of the same stuff with common flower-pots, about one and a half inch thick, and eighteen inches or two feet high, placed one above another, and the vent built round them, so that the smoke passing up these round earthen tubes, finds neither corner nor roughness on which to deposit the soot, and in fact there is very little collected. What sweeping is required is most easily performed by a brush like what housemaids call a *pope's head*, the handle of which consists of a

succession of pipes, one slipping on the top of another like the joints of a fishing-rod, so that the maid first sweeps the lower part of the vent, then adds another pipe, and sweeps a little higher, and so on. I have found this quite effectual, but the lining of the chimneys makes the accumulations of soot very trifling in comparison with the common case. Montgomery thanked me, but I think he would rather have had a sonnet; which puts me in mind of Mr. Puff's intended comedy of The Reformed Housebreaker, in which he was to put burglary in so ridiculous a point of view, that bolts and bars were likely to become useless by the end of the season.* Verily I have no idea of writing verse on a grave subject of utility, any more than of going to church in a cinque pace. Lottery tickets and Japan blacking may indeed be exceptions to the general rule. I am quite delighted at us two cool Scots answering in exactly the same manner, but I am afraid your *sooty men* (who are still in regular discharge of their duty) and my *pope's head* and lined vents will not suit the committee, who seem more anxious for poetry than for common sense. For my part, when I write on such subjects, I intend it shall be a grand historico-philosophico poem upon oil-gas, having been made president of the Oil-Gas Company of this city; the whale fishery might be introduced, and something pretty said about *palm* oil, which we think is apt to be popular among our lawyers. I am very sorry for poor Richardson, so much attached to his wife, and suffering so much in her suffering. I hope Tom Campbell gets on pretty well, and wish he would do something to sustain his deserved reputation. I wrote with Mrs. Siddons's consent to give Mrs. Hemans's tragedy a trial. I hope that her expectations are not very high, for I do not think our ordinary theatrical audience is either more judicious or less fastidious than those of England. They care little about poetry on the stage — it is situation, passion, and rapidity of action, which seem to be the principal requisites for ensuring the success of a modern drama; but I trust, by dint

* Sheridan's *Critic*, Act I.

of a special jury, the piece may have a decent success— certainly I should not hope for much more. I must see they bring it out before 12th March, if possible, as we go to the country that day. I have not seen Mrs. Siddons and her brother William Murray since their obliging answer, for one of my colleagues is laid up with gout, and this gives me long seats in the Court, of which you have reaped the fruits in this long epistle from the Clerks' table, done amid the bustle of pleaders, attorneys, and so forth. I will get a frank, however, if possible, for the matter is assuredly not worth a shilling postage. My kindest remembrances attend Mrs. Baillie and Mrs. Agnes. — Always yours, with sincere respect and affection, WALTER SCOTT."

"*To D. Terry, Esq., London.*

"Abbotsford, Feb. 18, 1824.

"My Dear Terry, — Your very kind letter reached me here, so that I was enabled to send you immediately an accurate sketch of the windows and chimney-sides of the drawing-room to measurement. I should like the mirrors handsome and the frames plain; the color of the hangings is green, with rich Chinese figures. On the side of the window I intend to have exactly beneath the glass a plain white side-table of the purest marble, on which to place Chantrey's bust. A truncated pillar of the same marble will be its support; and I think that, besides the mirror above, there will be a plate of mirror below the table; these memoranda will enable Baldock to say at what price those points can be handsomely accomplished. I have not yet spoken about the marble table; perhaps they may be all got in London. I shall be willing to give a handsome but not an extravagant price. I am much obliged to Mr. Baldock for his confidence about the screen. But what says Poor Richard?* 'Those who want

* See the Works of Dr. Franklin.

money when they come to buy, are apt to want money when they come to pay.' Again Poor Dick observes —

> 'That in many you find the true gentleman's fate:
> Ere his house is complete, he has sold his estate.'

So we will adjourn consideration of the screen till other times; let us first have the needful got and paid for. The stuff for the windows in the drawing-room is the crimson damask silk we bought last year. I enclose a scrap of it that the fringe may be made to match. I propose they should be hung with large handsome brass rings upon a brass cylinder, and I believe it would be best to have these articles from London — I mean the rings and cylinders; but I dislike much complication in the mode of drawing them separate, as it is eternally going wrong; those which divide in the middle, drawing back on each side like the curtains of an old-fashioned bed, and when drawn back are secured by a loop and tassel, are, I think, the handsomest, and can easily be made on the spot; the fringe should be silk, of course. I think the curtains of the library, considering the purpose of the room, require no fringe at all. We have, I believe, settled that they shall not be drawn in a line across the recess, as in the drawing-room, but shall circle along the inside of the windows. I refer myself to Mr. Atkinson about the fringe, but I think a little mixture of gold would look handsome with the crimson silk. As for the library, a yellow fringe, if any. I send a draught of the windows enclosed; the architraves are not yet up in the library, but they are accurately computed from the drawings of my kind friend Mr. Atkinson. There is plenty of time to think about these matters, for of course the rooms must be painted before they are put up. I saw the presses yesterday; they are very handsome, and remind me of the awful job of arranging my books. About July, Abbotsford will, I think, be finished, when I shall, like the old Duke of Queensberry who built Drumlanrig, fold up the accounts in a sealed parcel, with a label bidding 'the deil pike out the een of any

of my successors that shall open it.' I beg kind love to Mrs. Terry, Walter the Great, and Missy; delicious weather here, and birds singing St. Valentine's matins as if it were April. — Yours ever, WALTER SCOTT."

"P. S. — Pride will have a fall — I have a whelp of one of Dandie Dinmont's Pepper and Mustard terriers, which no sooner began to follow me into the house than Ourisque fell foul. The Liddesdale devil cocked its nose, and went up to the scratch like a tigress, downed Ourie, and served her out completely — since which Ourie has been so low that it seems going into an atrophy, and Ginger takes all manner of precedence, as the best place by the fire, and so on, to Lady Scott's great discomfiture. — Single letters by post: double to Croker — with a card enclosed, asking a frank to me."

About this time Miss Edgeworth announced the approaching marriage of her sister Sophia to Mr. Fox.

"*To Miss Edgeworth, Edgeworthstown.*

"Edinburgh, February 24, 1824.

"My Dear Miss Edgeworth, — I do not delay a moment to send my warmest and best congratulations upon the very happy event which is about to take place in your family, and to assure you that you do me but common justice in supposing that I take the warmest interest in whatever concerns my young friend. All Abbotsford to an acre of Poyais* that she will make an excellent wife; and most truly happy am I to think that she has such an admirable prospect of matrimonial happiness, although at the expense of thwarting the maxim, and showing that

'The course of true love *sometimes may* run smooth.'

It will make a pretty vista, as I hope and trust, for you,

* One of the bubbles of this bubble period, was a scheme of colonization at Poyais.

my good friend, to look forwards with an increase of interest to futurity. Lady Scott, Anne, and Sophia, send their sincere and hearty congratulations upon this joyful occasion. I hope to hear her sing the *petticoat of red* some day in her own house. I should be apt to pity you a little amid all your happiness, if you had not my friend Miss Harriet, besides other young companions whose merits are only known to me by report, to prevent your feeling so much as you would otherwise the blank which this event must occasion in your domestic society. Sophia, I hope, will be soon able to make her own gratulations; she is recovering very well, and overjoyed to hear such good news from your quarter. I have been on a short trip to Abbotsford, to set painters to work to complete what Slender would call, 'Mine own great chamber;' and on my return I was quite delighted to see the change on my daughter. Little John Hugh is likewise much better, but will require nursing and care for some years at least. Yet I have often known such hot-house plants bear the open air as well as those that were reared on the open moor.

"I am not at all surprised at what you say of the Yankees. They are a people possessed of very considerable energy, quickened and brought into eager action by an honourable love of their country and pride in their institutions; but they are as yet rude in their ideas of social intercourse, and totally ignorant, speaking generally, of all the art of good-breeding, which consists chiefly in a postponement of one's own petty wishes or comforts to those of others. By rude questions and observations, an absolute disrespect to other people's feelings, and a ready indulgence of their own, they make one feverish in their company, though perhaps you may be ashamed to confess the reason. But this will wear off, and is already wearing away. Men, when they have once got benches, will soon fall into the use of cushions. They are advancing in the lists of our literature, and they will not be long deficient in the *petite morale*, especially as they have, like ourselves, the rage for travelling. I have

seen a new work, the Pilot, by the author of the Spy and Pioneer. The hero is the celebrated Paul Jones, whom I well remember advancing above the island of Inchkeith with three small vessels to lay Leith under contribution. I remember my mother being alarmed with the drum, which she had heard all her life at eight o'clock, conceiving it to be the pirates who had landed. I never saw such a change as betwixt that time, 1779, in the military state of a city. Then Edinburgh had scarce three companies of men under arms; and latterly she furnished 5000, with complete appointments, of cavalry, artillery, and infantry — enough to have eaten Paul Jones and his whole equipage. Nay, the very square in which my father's house stands could even then have furnished a body of armed men sufficient to have headed back as large a party as he could well have landed. However, the novel is a very clever one, and the sea-scenes and characters in particular are admirably drawn; and I advise you to read it as soon as possible. I have little news to send from Abbotsford; *Spice* is much better, though still asthmatic; she is extremely active, and in high spirits, though the most miserable, thin, long-backed creature I ever saw. She is extremely like the shadow of a dog on the wall; such a sketch as a child makes in its first attempts at drawing a monster — with a large head, four feet, and a most portentous longitude of back. There was great propriety in Miss Harriet's dream after all, for if ever a dog needed six legs, poor Spice certainly requires a pair of additional supporters. She is now following me a little, though the duty of body-guard has devolved for the present on a cousin of hers, a fierce game devil, that goes at everything, and has cowed Ourisque's courage in a most extraordinary degree, to Lady Scott's great vexation. Here is a tale of dogs, and dreams, and former days — but the only pleasure in writing is to write whatever comes readiest to the pen. My wife and Anne send kindest compliments of congratulation, as also Charles, who has come down to spend four or five months with us; he is just entered at Brazen Nose — on fire to be a scholar of classical renown,

and studying (I hope the humour will last) like a very dragon. — Always, my dear Miss Edgeworth, with best love to the bride and to dear Harriet, very much yours,

"WALTER SCOTT."

"*To Daniel Terry, Esq., London.*

"Abbotsford, March 13, 1824.

"My Dear Terry, — We are now arrived here, and in great bustle with painters, which obliges me to press you about the mirrors. If we cannot have them soon, there is now an excellent assortment at Trotter's, where I can be supplied, for I will hardly again endure to have the house turned upside down by upholsterers — and wish the whole business ended, and the house rid of that sort of cattle once for all. I am only ambitious to have one fine mirror over the chimney-piece; a smaller one will do for the other side of the room. Lady Scott has seen some Bannockburn carpets, which will answer very well, unless there are any bespoken. They are putting up my presses, which look very handsome. In the drawing-room, the cedar doors and windows, being well varnished, assume a most rich and beautiful appearance. The Chinese paper in the drawing-room is most beautiful, saving the two ugly blanks left for these mirrors of d————n, which I dare say you curse as heartily as I do. I wish you could secure a parcel of old caricatures which can be bought cheap, for the purpose of papering two *cabinets à l'eau.* John Ballantyne used to make great hauls in this way. The Tory side of the question would of course be most acceptable; but I don't care about this, so the prints have some spirit. Excuse this hasty and pressing letter; if you saw the plight we are in, you would pity and forgive. At Baldock, as I have had at you. My mother whips me, and I whip the top. Best compliments to Mrs. Terry. — Believe me always yours,

"WALTER SCOTT."

"*To Archibald Constable, Esq., Polton House, Lasswade.*

"Abbotsford, 29th March 1824.

"My Dear Constable, — Since I received your letter I have been on the look-out for a companion for you, and have now the pleasure to send one bred at Abbotsford of a famous race. His name has hitherto been Cribb, but you may change it if you please. I will undertake for his doing execution upon the rats, which Polton was well stocked with when I knew it some seventeen or eighteen years ago. You must take some trouble to attach Mr. Cribb, otherwise he will form low connexions in the kitchen, which are not easily broken off. The best and most effectual way is to feed him yourself for a few days.

"I congratulate you heartily, my good old friend, on your look-forward to domestic walks and a companion of this sort; and I have no doubt your health will gradually be confirmed by it. I will take an early opportunity to see you when we return to Edinburgh. I like the banks of the Esk, which to me are full of many remembrances, among which those relating to poor Leyden must come home to you as well as to me. I am ranging in my improvements — painting my baronial hall with all the scutcheons of the border clans, and many similar devices. For the roof-tree I tried to blazon my own quarterings, and succeeded easily with eight on my father's side; but on my mother's side I stuck fast at the mother of my great-great-grandfather. The ancestor himself was John Rutherford of Grundisnock, which is an appanage of the Hunthill estate, and he was married to Isabel Ker of Bloodylaws. I think I have heard that either this John of Grundisnock or his father was one of the nine sons of the celebrated Cock of Hunthill, who seems to have had a reasonable brood of chickens. Do you know anything of the pedigree of the Hunthills? The Earl of Teviot was of a younger branch, Rutherford of Quarrelholes, but of the same family. If I could find out these Rutherfords, and who they married, I could complete my tree, which is otherwise correct; but if

not, I will paint clouds on these three shields, with the motto *Vixerunt fortes ante.* These things are trifles when correct, but very absurd and contemptible if otherwise. Edgerstane cannot help me; he only knows that my grandfather was a cousin of his — and you know he represents Hunthill. My poor mother has often told me about it, but it was to regardless ears. Would to God I had old Mrs. Keddie of Leith, who screeded off all the alliances between the Andersons of Ettrick House and the Andersons of Ettrick Hall, though Michael was the name of every second man, and, to complete the mess, they intermarried with each other. — Yours truly,

"WALTER SCOTT."

A bad accident in a fox-chase occurred at this time to Sir Walter's dear friend Mr. Scott of Gala. The ice-house at Abbotsford was the only one in the neighbourhood that had been filled during the preceding winter, and to Tom Purdie's care in that particular, Mr. Scott's numerous friends owed the preservation of his valuable life.

"*To the Lord Montagu, &c., Ditton Park.*

"Edinburgh, 14th April 1824.

"My Dear Lord, — You might justly think me most unmerciful, were you to consider this letter as a provoke requiring an answer. It comes partly to thank you twenty times for your long and most kind letter, and partly, which I think not unnecessary, to tell you that Gala may now, I trust, be considered as quite out of danger. He has swam for his life though, and barely saved it. It is for the credit of the clan to state that he had no dishonour as a horseman by his fall. He had alighted to put his saddle to rights, and the horse, full of corn and little work, went off with him before he got into his seat, and went headlong down a sort of precipice. He fell at least fifteen feet without stopping, and no one that saw the accident could hope he should be taken up a living man. Yet, after

losing a quart of blood, he walked home on foot, and no dangerous symptoms appeared till five or six days after, when they came with a vengeance. He continues to use the ice with wonderful effect, though it seems a violent remedy.

"How fate besets us in our sports and in our most quiet domestic moments! Your Lordship's story of the lamp makes one shudder, and I think it wonderful that Lady Montagu felt no more bad effects from the mere terror of such an accident; but the gentlest characters have often most real firmness. I once saw something of the kind upon a very large scale. You may have seen at Somerset House an immense bronze chandelier with several hundred burners, weighing three or four tons at least. On the day previous to the public exhibition of the paintings, the Royal Academicians are in use, as your Lordship knows, to give an immensely large dinner-party to people of distinction, supposed to be patrons of the art, to literary men, to amateurs in general, and the Lord knows whom besides. I happened to be there the first time this ponderous mass of bronze was suspended. It had been cast for his Majesty, then Prince Regent, and he not much liking it — I am surprised he did not, as it is very ugly indeed — had bestowed it on the Royal Academicians. Beneath it was placed, as at Ditton, a large round table, or rather a tier of tables, rising above each other like the shelves of a dumb-waiter, and furnished with as many glasses, tumblers, decanters, and so forth, as might have set up an entire glass shop — the numbers of the company, upwards of 150 persons, requiring such a supply. Old West presided, and was supported by Jockey of Norfolk on the one side, and one of the royal Dukes on the other. We had just drunk a preliminary toast or two, when — the Lord preserve us! — a noise was heard like that which precedes an earthquake — the links of the massive chain by which this beastly lump of bronze was suspended, began to give way, and the mass descending slowly for several inches, encountered the table beneath, which was positively annihilated by the pressure, the whole glass-ware being at once destroyed. What was very odd, the chain,

after this manifestation of weakness, continued to hold fast; the skilful inspected it and declared it would yield no farther — and we, I think to the credit of our courage, remained quiet, and continued our sitting. Had it really given way, as the architecture of Somerset House has been in general esteemed unsubstantial, it must have broke the floor like a bombshell, and carried us all down to the cellars of that great national edifice. Your Lordship's letter placed the whole scene in my recollection. A fine paragraph we should have made.*

"I think your Lordship will be much pleased with the fine plantation on Bowden Moor. I have found an excellent legend for the spot. It is close by the grave of an unhappy being, called *Wattie Waeman* (whether the last appellative was really his name, or has been given him from his melancholy fate, is uncertain), who being all for love and a little for stealing, hung himself there seventy or eighty years since (*quere*, where did he find a tree?) at once to revenge himself of his mistress, and to save the gallows a labour. Now, as the place of his grave and of his suicide is just on the verge where the Duke's land meets with mine and Kippilaw's — (you are aware that where three lairds' lands meet is always a charmed spot) — the spirit of Wattie Waeman wanders sadly over the adjacent moors, to the great terror of all wandering wights who have occasion to pass from Melrose to Bowden. I begin to think which of his namesakes this omen concerns, for I take Walter Kerr of Kippilaw to be out of the question. I never heard of a Duke actually dying for love, though the Duke in the Twelfth Night be in an alarming way. On the other hand, Sir John Græme of the West Countrie, who died for cruel Barbara Allan, is a case in point against the Knight. Thus, in extreme cases, your Duke loses his head, whereas your Knight or Esquire is apt to retain it upon a neck a little

* This story is also told in Scott's Essay on the Life of Kemble. See *Quarterly Review*, No. 67, or *Miscellaneous Prose Works*, (Edin. Ed.) vol. xx. pp. 195–7.

more elongated than usual. I will pursue the discussion no further, as the cards appear to turn against me. The people begin to call the plantation Waeman's Wood — rather a good name.

"It is quite impossible your Lordship should be satisfied with the outside view of my castle, for I reckon upon the honour of receiving your whole party, *quotquot adestis*, as usual, in the interior. We have plenty of room for a considerable number of friends at bed as well as board. Do not be alarmed by the report of the gas, which was quite true, but reflects no dishonour on that mode of illumination. I had calculated that fifteen hundred cubic feet of gas would tire out some five-and-twenty or thirty pair of feet of Scotch dancers, but it lasted only till six in the morning, and then, as a brave soldier does on his post, went out when burned out. Had I kept the man sitting up for an hour or two to make the gas as fast as consumed, I should have spoiled a good story.

"My hall is in the course of having all the heavy parts of my armorial collection bestowed upon it, and really, though fanciful, looks very well, and I am as busy as a bee, disposing suits of armour, battle-axes, broadswords, and all the knick-knacks I have been breaking my shins over in every corner of the house for these seven years past, in laudable order and to the best advantage.

"If Mr. Blakeney be the able person that fame reports him, he will have as great a duty to perform as his ancestor at Stirling Castle;* for to keep so young a person as my chief, in his particular situation, from the inroads of follies, and worse than follies, requires as much attention and firmness as to keep Highland claymores and French engineers out of a fortified place. But there is an admirable garrison in the fortress — kind and generous feelings, and a strong sense of honour and duty, which Duke Walter has by descent from his father and grandfather. God send him life and health, and I trust

* General Blakeney, grandfather to Lord M.'s friend, was Governor of Stirling Castle in 1745.

he will reward your Lordship's paternal care, and fulfil my hopes. They are not of the lowest, but such as must be entertained by an old and attached friend of the family who has known him from infancy. My friend Lord John wants the extreme responsibility of his brother's situation, and may afford to sow a few more wild oats, but I trust he will not make the crop a large one. Lord * * * * and his tutor have just left us for the south, after spending three or four days with us. They could not have done worse than sending the young Viscount to Edinburgh, for though he is really an unaffected natural young man, yet it was absurd to expect that he should study hard, when he had six invitations for every hour of every evening. I am more and more convinced of the excellence of the English monastic institutions of Cambridge and Oxford. They cannot do all that may be expected, but there is at least the exclusion of many temptations to dissipation of mind; whereas with us, supposing a young man to have any pretensions to keep good society — and, to say truth, we are not very nice in investigating them — he is almost pulled to pieces by speculating mammas and flirting misses. If a man is poor, plain, and indifferently connected, he may have excellent opportunities of study at Edinburgh; otherwise he should beware of it.

"Lady Anne is very naughty not to take care of herself, and I am not sorry she has been a *little* ill, that it may be a warning. I wish to hear your Lordship's self is at Bath. I hate unformed complaints. A doctor is like Ajax — give him light, and he may make battle with a disease; but, no disparagement to the Esculapian art, they are bad guessers. My kindest compliments, I had almost said *love*, attend Lady Isabella. We are threatened with a cruel deprivation in the loss of our friend Sir Adam, the first of men. A dog of a banker has bought his house for an investment of capital, and I fear he must trudge. Had I still had the Highland piper * in my service, who would not have refused me such a favour,

* John of Skye had left Abbotsford — but he soon returned.

I would have had him dirked to a certainty—I mean this cursed banker. As it is, I must think of some means of poisoning his hot rolls and butter, or setting his house on fire, by way of revenge. It is a real affliction. — I am happy to hear of Lady Margaret's good looks. I was one of her earliest acquaintance, and at least half her godfather, for I took the vows on me for somebody or other, who, I dare say, has never thought half so often of her as I have done. And so I have written out my paper, and, I fear, your Lordship's patience. My respectful compliments attend Lady Montagu and the young ladies of Ditton. — Always most truly yours,

"WALTER SCOTT."

The estate of Gattonside was purchased about this time by Mr. George Bainbridge of Liverpool — and Sir Adam and Lady Fergusson, to Scott's great regret, went a year or two afterwards to another part of Scotland. The "cursed banker," however, had only to be known to be liked and esteemed. Mr. Bainbridge had, among other merits, great skill in sports — especially in that which he has illustrated by the excellent manual entitled "The Fly-fisher's Guide;" and Gattonside-house speedily resumed its friendly relations with Abbotsford.

The next letter was in answer to one in which Lord Montagu had communicated his difficulties about fixing to which of the English Universities he should send the young Duke of Buccleuch: —

"*To the Lord Montagu, &c. &c.*

"Edinburgh, 15th June 1824.

"My Dear Lord, — I was much interested by your Lordship's last letter. For some certain reasons I rather prefer Oxford to Cambridge, chiefly because the last great University was infected long ago with liberalism in politics, and at

present shows some symptoms of a very different heresy, which is yet sometimes blended with the first — I mean enthusiasm in religion — not that sincere zeal for religion, in which mortals cannot be too fervid, but the far more doubtful enthusiasm which makes religion a motive and a pretext for particular lines of thinking in politics and in temporal affairs. This is a spirit which, while it has abandoned the lower classes — where perhaps it did some good, for it *is* a guard against gross and scandalous vice — has transferred itself to the upper classes, where, I think, it can do little but evil, — disuniting families, setting children in opposition to parents, and teaching, as I think, a new way of going to the Devil for God's sake. On the other hand, this is a species of doctrine not likely to carry off our young friend; and I am sure Mr. Blakeney's good sense will equally guard him against political mistakes — for I should think my friend Professor Smyth's historical course of lectures likely to be somewhat Whiggish, though I dare say not improperly so. Upon the whole, I think the reasons your Lordship's letter contains in favour of Cambridge are decisive, although I may have a private wish in favour of Christ Church, which I dare say will rear its head once more under the new Dean.* The neighbourhood of Newmarket is certainly in some sort a snare for so young persons as attend college at Cambridge: but, alas! where is it that there be not snares of one kind or other? Parents, and those who have the more delicate task of standing in the room of parents, must weigh objections and advantages, and without expecting to find any that are without risk, must be content to choose those where the chances seem most favourable. The turf is no doubt a very forceful temptation, especially to a youth of high rank and fortune. There is something very flattering in winning, when good fortune depends so much on shrewdness of observation, and, as it is called, knowingness; the very sight is of an agitating character; and perhaps there are few things more fascinating to young men, whose large fortune excludes the ordinary

* Dr. Samuel Smith became Dean of Christ Church in 1824.

causes of solicitude, than the pleasures and risks of the race course; and though, when indulged to excess, it leads to very evil consequences, yet, if the Duke hereafter should like to have a stud of racers, he might very harmlessly amuse himself in that way, provided he did not suffer it to take too eager possession of his mind, or to engross his time. Certainly one would rather he had not the turn at all, but I am far more afraid of sedentary games of chance, for wasting time and fortune, than I am of any active out-of-doors sport whatsoever.

"Old Paradise did not number a neighbourhood among its pleasures; but Gattonside has that advantage, and great will be the regret of the said neighbours, if Sir Adam and Lady Eve are turned out. I parted with them at Blair-Adam on this day — for, taking a fit of what waiting-maids call *the clevers*, I started at six this morning, and got here to breakfast. As it blew hard all night, there was a great swell on the ferry, so that I came through

'Like Chieftain to the Highlands bound,
Crying, boatman, "do not tarry —"' *

or rather,

'Like Clerk unto the Session bound.'

"I could have borne a worse toss, and even a little danger, since the wind brought rain, which is so much wanted. One set of insects is eating the larch — another the spruce. Many of the latter will not, I think, recover the stripping they are receiving. Crops are looking well, except the hay, which is not looking at all. The sheep are eating roasted grass, but will not be the worse mutton, as I hope soon to prove to your Lordship at Abbotsford. — I am always, my dear Lord, yours faithful to command, WALTER SCOTT.

"P. S. — I am here, according to the old saying, *bird-alane;* for my son Charles is fishing at Lochleven, and my wife and

* Campbell's *Lord Ullin's Daughter.*

daughter (happy persons!) are at Abbotsford. I took the opportunity to spend two days at Tyninghame. Lord Haddington complains of want of memory, while his conversation is as witty as a comedy, and his anecdote as correct as a parish register.*

"I will be a suitor for a few acorns this year, if they ripen well at Ditton, or your other forests. Those I had before from you (raised in the nursery, not planted out) are now fine oak plants."

Among Scott's visiters of the next month, first in Edinburgh, and afterwards on Tweedside, were the late amiable and venerable Dr. Hughes, one of the Canons-residentiary of St. Paul's, and his warm-hearted lady. The latter had been numbered among his friends from an early period of life, and a more zealously affectionate friend he never possessed. On her way to Scotland she had halted at Keswick to visit Mr. Southey, whom also she had long known well, and corresponded with frequently. Hence the following letters.

"*To Robert Southey, Esq., Keswick, Cumberland.*

"My Dear Southey, — Do you remember Richardson's metaphor of two bashful lovers running opposite to each other in parallel lines, without the least chance of union, until some good-natured body gives a shove to the one, and a shove to the other, and so leads them to form a junction? Two lazy correspondents may, I think, form an equally apt subject for the simile, for here have you and I been silent for I know not how many years, for no other reason than the uncertainty which wrote last, or which was in duty bound to write first. And here comes my clever, active, bustling friend Mrs. Hughes, and tells me that you regret a silence which I have not the least

* Charles, eighth Earl of Haddington — remarkable for the graces of his person and the humour of his conversation — died in March 1828, aged 76.

power of accounting for, except upon the general belief that I wrote you a long epistle after your kind present of the Lay of the Laureate, and that I have once every week proposed to write you a still longer, till shame of my own indolence confirmed me in my evil habits of procrastination — when here comes good Mrs. Hughes, gives me a shake by the collar, and assures me that you are in pretty nearly the same case with myself — and, as a very slight external impulse will sometimes drive us into action when a long succession of internal resolutions have been made and broke, I take my pen to assure my dear Southey that I love him as well as if our correspondence had been weekly or daily.

"The years which have gone by have found me dallying with the time, and you improving it as usual, — I tossing my ball and driving my hoop, a grey-headed schoolboy — and you plying your task unremittingly for the instruction of our own and future ages. Yet I have not been wholly idle or useless — witness five hundred acres of moor and moss, now converted into hopeful woodland of various sizes, to the great refreshment, even already, of the eyes of the pilgrims who still journey to Melrose. I wish you could take a step over the Border this season with Mrs. Southey, and let us have the pleasure of showing you what I have been doing. I twice intended an invasion of this sort upon your solitude at Keswick — one in spring 1821, and then again in the summer of the same year when the coronation took place. But the convenience of going to London by the steam-packet, which carries you on whether you wake or sleep, is so much preferable to a long land journey, that I took it on both occasions. The extreme rapidity of communication, which places an inhabitant of Edinburgh in the metropolis sooner than a letter can reach it by the post, is like to be attended with a mass of most important consequences — some, or rather most of them, good, but some also which are not to be viewed without apprehension. It must make the public feeling and sentiment of London, whatever that may chance to be, much more readily and emphatically influential upon the rest of the kingdom, and I

am by no means sure that it will be on the whole desirable that the whole country should be as subject to be moved by its example as the inhabitants of its suburbs. Admitting the metropolis to be the heart of the system, it is no sign of health when the blood flows too rapidly through the system at every pulsation. Formerly, in Edinburgh and other towns, the impulse received from any strong popular feeling in London was comparatively slow and gradual, and had to contend with opposite feelings and prejudices of a national or provincial character; the matter underwent a reconsideration, and the cry which was raised in the great mart of halloo and humbug was not instantly echoed back, as it may be in the present day and present circumstances, when our opinion, like a small drop of water brought into immediate contiguity with a bigger, is most likely to be absorbed in and united with that of the larger mass. However, you and I have outlived so many real perils, that it is not perhaps wise to dread those that are only contingent, especially where the cause out of which they arise brings with it so much absolute and indisputable advantage.

"What is Wordsworth doing? I was unlucky in being absent when he crossed the Border. I heartily wish I could induce him to make a foray this season, and that you and Mrs. Southey, and Miss Wordsworth, my very good and well remembered friend, could be of the party. Pray think of this, for the distance is nothing to well resolved minds, and you in particular owe me a visit. I have never quite forgiven your tour in Scotland without looking in upon my poor premises. Well, as I have re-appeared like your floating island, which I see the newspapers aver hath again, after seven years' soaking, become visible to mortal ken, it would not be fair in me to make my visit too long a one — so, with kindest respects to Mrs. Southey, in which my wife sincerely joins, I am always most truly yours,

"WALTER SCOTT.

"8th July 1824, Edinburgh.

"Address Abbotsford, Melrose.

"You may have heard that about four years since I was brought to death's door by a violent, and at the same time most obstinate complaint — a sort of spasms in the stomach or diaphragm, which for a long time defied medicine. It gave way at length to a terrific course of calomel, such as made the cure almost as bad as the disease. Since that time, I have recovered even a better portion of health than I generally had before, and that was excellent. I do not indeed possess the activity of former days, either on foot or horseback, but while I can ride a pony, and walk five or six miles with pleasure, I have no reason to complain. The rogue Radicals had nearly set me on horseback again, but I would have had a good *following* to help out my own deficiencies, as all my poor neighbours were willing to fight for *Kirk* and *King*."

Mr. Southey's next letter enclosed a MS. copy of his Ode on the King's Northern Progress of 1822. Sir Walter, in his reply, adverts to the death of Louis XVIII., which occurred on the 17th of September 1824 — and prophesies the fate of his successor.

"*To Robert Southey, Esq., Keswick, Cumberland.*

"Bowhill, 26th Sept. 1824.

"My Dear Southey, — I did not immediately thank you for your beautiful poem on the King's Visit, because I was afraid you might think that I was trespassing too much on time which is always well employed; but I must not let the ice settle again on the stream of our correspondence, and therefore, while I have a quiet morning, I employ part of it to thank you for the kindness you have done me as a friend, and still more for the honour you have bestowed on my country. I hope these verses are one day to see the light, and am too much personally interested not to expect that period with impatience.

"I had a letter from Gifford some time since, by which I perceive with regret he renounces further management of the Quarterly. I scarce guess what can be done by Murray in

that matter, unless he could prevail on you to take the charge. No work of the kind can make progress (though it may be kept afloat) under a mere bookselling management. And the difficulty of getting a person with sufficient independence of spirit, accuracy of judgment, and extent of knowledge, to exercise the profession of Aristarch, seems very great. Yet I have been so long out of the London circles that new stars may have arisen, and set for aught I know, since I was occasionally within the hemisphere.

"The King of France's death, with which one would think I had wondrous little to do, has produced to me the great disappointment of preventing Canning's visit. He had promised to spend two or three days at Abbotsford on his road to Edinburgh,* and it is the more provoking, as I dare say, after all, there is no farther occasion for his being at his post than arises from matter of mere form, since I suppose there is no reason to think that Charles X. will change the line of policy adopted by his brother. I remember him in Edinburgh about 1794, one of the most elegant men in address and exterior whom I ever saw. Strange times we have lived in! I am speaking of Charles X. as a Frenchman of 1661 might have spoken of Charles II. By the way, did you ever observe how easy it would be for a good historian to run a parallel betwixt the great Rebellion and the French Revolution, just substituting the spirit of fanaticism for that of soi-disant philosophy. But then how the character of the English would rise — whether you considered the talents and views of the great leaders on either side, or the comparative moderation and humanity with which they waged their warfare! I sometimes think an instructive comparative view might be made out, and it would afford a comfortable augury that the Restoration in either case was followed by many amendments in the Constitution. I hope Louis Baboon will not carry the matter so far as to require completing the par-

* Mr. Canning spent some part of the summer of 1824 in a visit to the Marquess Wellesley, then Lord Lieutenant of Ireland; and had proposed to return from Dublin by the way of Scotland. I think there was to have been a public dinner in his honour at Edinburgh.

allel by a second Revolution — but it would be very singular if the devotion of this King to the Catholic priests and forms should occasion such a catastrophe. — Heber has promised to come down here, and if so, I will perhaps return with him as far as Rokeby, and, if we can, take Keswick on our way, were it but to see you for an hour. All this, however, is speculation. I am just sending off my younger son to Oxford. My eldest is an officer in the 15th Hussars, and I believe will soon get that object of every young officer's ambition, a troop, which would be great luck. — Believe me, dear Southey, most truly yours, WALTER SCOTT."

In October of this year, Sir Walter's son Charles began his residence at Brazen-nose College, Oxford. The adoption of this plan implied finally dropping the appointment in the civil service of the East-India Company, which had been placed at his disposal by Lord Bathurst in the spring of 1820; a step, I need not observe, which, were there any doubt on that subject, would alone be sufficient to prove, to the conviction of the most envious sceptic, that the young gentleman's father at this time considered his own worldly fortunes as in a highly prosperous situation. A writership in India is early independence; — in the case of a son of Scott, so conducting himself as not to discredit the name he inherited, it could hardly have failed to be early wealth. And Sir Walter was the last man to deprive his boy of such safe and easy prospects of worldly advantage, turning him over to the precarious chances of a learned profession in Great Britain, unless in the confidence that his own resources were so great as to render ultimate failure in such a career a matter of no primary importance.

The Vicar of Lampeter, meanwhile, had become a candidate for the rectorship of a new classical academy,

founded this year at Edinburgh; and Sir Walter Scott's influence was zealously exerted in behalf of his son's learned and estimable tutor. Mr. Williams was successful in his object; and at the opening of the institution (1st October) the Poet appeared in Edinburgh to preside over the ceremonial in which this excellent friend was so deeply concerned. I transcribe what follows from a report prepared at the time (but never until now published) by the honorary secretary of the academy, Mr. John Russell, W. S.:—

"The Rev. Sir Henry Moncreiff Wellwood, Bart.* (minister of the parish), at the request of Sir Walter Scott, opened the business of the meeting, by an eloquent and impressive prayer, in which he invoked the blessing of the Almighty on the Institution.

"Sir Walter Scott then rose, and observed, that it had been determined by the Directors, that some account should be given on this occasion of the nature and meaning of the Institution. He wished that some one better qualified had been appointed for this purpose; but as the duty had been imposed upon him, he should endeavour to discharge it as briefly as possible. In Scotland, and before such an assembly, it was unnecessary for him to enlarge on the general advantages of education. It was that which distinguished man from the lower animals in the creation — which recorded every fact of history, and transmitted them in perfect order from one generation to another. Our forefathers had shown their sense of its importance by their conduct; but they could little have conceived the length to which discoveries in science and literature had gone in this age; and those now present could as little anticipate to what extent posterity might carry them. Future ages might probably speak of the knowledge of the 18th and 19th centuries, as we now do of that of the 15th and 16th.

* This venerable clergyman died 9th August 1827, aged 77.

But let them remember that the progress of knowledge was gradual; and as their ancestors had been anxious to secure to them the benefits of education, so let it be said of the present age, that it paved the way for the improvement of the generations which were to follow. He need not repeat to Scotsmen, that at an early period the most anxious solicitude had been shown on this subject. While Scotland was torn with convulsions, and the battle-brand was yet red, our forefathers had sat down to devise the means of spreading the blessings of knowledge among their posterity, as the most effectual means of preventing those dark and bloody times from recurring. We had but lately sheathed a triumphant sword, and lived now in a period of profound peace; and long, long might it be before the sword was again unsheathed! This was therefore a proper time for improving the institutions of the country, and endeavouring to cause its literature to keep pace with its high martial achievements. In forming an institution like the present, there was something generous and disinterested. The founders of a library might enjoy the benefit of reading in that library — the founder of an hospital had had sometimes the melancholy gratification, in the decline of his fortunes, of reposing under the roof of the asylum which his charity had erected for others: but such could not be the case with those who subscribed for this institution. It was like a torch held out in the hand of a dead man, which imparted light to others, but to the bearer it gave none. He therefore called on the young to attend to the instructions that would be addressed to them in this Academy, erected exclusively for their benefit, and not for that of those by whom it had been founded.

"The establishment of those excellent institutions, the Parochial Schools, had early induced the moral and orderly habits which had so much tended to raise the character of our countrymen. King James, whatever had been his failings in other respects, had attended to the education of the youth, and had founded an institution (the High School), which flourished at this moment, the pride and boast of our City; but, from the great increase of population, its size was now found inadequate

to the duty originally intended. Since its establishment, the city had increased to six times the extent it then was; and the great number of subscribers to the present Institution proved the general feeling that something must be done to relieve the Metropolitan school. It was true there were many private seminaries, whose teachers were men of great talent; but schools of that description were not so well calculated to secure the education of children as an institution like the present. It was plain to the most common understanding, that one man could not teach four or five classes of pupils with the same success that one man could teach one class; that was quite plain. A jealousy had been entertained that the design of the present institution was to hurt the more ancient seminary. Look at those who were the leading members of this society; — many of them who had received their education at the High School, whose fathers and grandfathers had been instructed there, and who also had their children there: they were not capable of entertaining a thought to the prejudice of that seminary. The effect of the present institution would only be to relieve the High School of superfluous scholars, and thereby leave the hands of its teachers more at liberty to educate those who were left. He trusted he should hear nothing more of such an unworthy motive. He was sure there would be no petty jealousies — no rivalry between the two institutions, but the honourable and fair rivalry of scholarship. He was convinced Palinurus would not slumber at the helm, while he beheld another vessel striving to gain the port before him.

"In appropriating the funds which had so liberally been placed at their disposal, the Directors had observed the strictest economy. By the ingenuity of Mr. Burn the Architect, whose plans for, and superintendence of the buildings, had been a labour of love, it would be observed, that not much had been lost. If they had not the beauty of lavish ornament, they had at least taste and proportion to boast of — a more important part of architecture than high finishing.— The Directors had a more difficult and delicate duty to per-

form than the rearing of stone walls, in choosing the gentlemen who were to carry into execution their plans; a task important beyond the power of language to describe, from the number of certificates produced by men of talent who were willing to abandon their situations in other seminaries, and to venture the credit of their reputation and prospects in life on this experimental project of ours — a task so delicate, that the Directors were greatly at a loss whom to choose among seventy or eighty individuals, of almost equal merit, and equally capable of undertaking the task. The one principle which guided the Directors in their selection was — who were most likely to give satisfaction to them and to the public? He trusted they had been successful in the performance of this task. The University of Oxford has given them one of its most learned scholars (the Rector), in the flower of his age, with fifteen years' experience as a teacher, and of whose acquirements, in that gentleman's presence, he would not speak in the terms he would employ elsewhere. To him the Directors trusted as the main pillar of the establishment: he was sure also, he would be well supported by the other gentlemen; and that the whole machine would move easily and smoothly.

"But there was still another selection of no mean difficulty. In the formation of a new, they must lose some of the advantages of an ancient and venerable institution. One could not lay his hands on the head of his son, and say, this is the same bench on which I sat; this is the voice which first instructed me. — They had to identify their children with a new institution. But they had something to counterbalance these disadvantages. If they had not the venerable Gothic temple, the long sounding galleries, and turreted walls — where every association was favourable to learning — they were also free from the prejudices peculiar to such seminaries, — the 'rich windows which *exclude* the light, and passages that lead to nothing.' Something might be gained from novelty. The attention of the Directors had been particularly turned to the fact, that while Scotland was, on the whole, the best informed country in Europe, it had not of late produced many eminent

classical scholars. The observation of Dr. Johnson was well known, that in learning, Scotland resembled a besieged city, where every man had a mouthful, but no man a bellyful. It might be said, in answer to this, that it was better education should be divided into mouthfuls, than served up at the banquet of some favoured individuals, while the great mass were left to starve. But, sturdy Scotsman as he was, he was not more attached to Scotland than to truth; and it must be admitted, that there was some foundation for the Doctor's remark. The Directors were anxious to wipe off this reproach, and for this purpose had made every provision in their power. They had made some additions to the course adopted in the High School, but in no case had they made any innovation from the mere love of change. It was a part of their plan to lay a foundation for a thorough knowledge of the Latin tongue, by the most precise and careful study of its elemental principles. With this they meant to conjoin the study of Greek, to be begun at an earlier period, and prosecuted to a greater extent, than hitherto was customary in Scotland. It was the language of the fathers of history, and of a people whose martial achievements and noble deeds were the ornament of their pages. At no moment was the study of that beautiful language so interesting as at present, when the people among whom it was still in use, were again, as he trusted, about to emancipate themselves from slavery and barbarism, and take their rank among free nations. There would also be instruction in Writing and Arithmetic — and a class for the study of Mathematics, from which the Directors hoped great advantage would accrue to the pupils. There would be another class in this institution, which was not to be found in any other similar academy — a class for the study of English Literature. It had been justly remarked, that the study of classics had sometimes led to the neglect of our own language, and that some scholars could express themselves better in Latin than in English. To avoid this error, a teacher was added to the institution, who was to instruct the boys in the principles of English Composition, and to connect with this a knowlege of

the history of their own country. He would have the youths taught to venerate the patriots and heroes of our own country, along with those of Greece and Rome; to know the histories of Wallace and Bruce, as well as those of Themistocles and of Cæsar; and that the recollection of the fields of Flodden and Bannockburn should not be lost in those of Platæa and Marathon. The Masters would open their classes every morning with prayer; and a portion of Scripture would be read by one of the boys every Monday morning, before the commencement of the week's labours.

"In conclusion, Sir Walter addressed a few words to his young friends around him. He observed, that the public could not have given a more interesting mark of their confidence in the managers of the Seminary, than they had done, in placing under their direction these young persons, characterised by the Roman matron as her most precious jewels, for every one of whom he was sensible more than one bosom was at present beating, anxious for their future happiness and prosperity. He exhorted them to give their whole souls and minds to their studies, without which it was little that either their Teachers or Directors could do. If they were destined for any of the learned professions, he begged them to remember that a physician without learning was a mere quack; a lawyer without learning was a pettifogger; and a clergyman without learning was like a soldier without a sword, who had not the means of enforcing the authority of his Divine Master. Next to a conscience void of offence towards God and man, the greatest possession they could have was a well cultivated mind; it was that alone which distinguished them from the beasts that perish. If they went to India or other distant quarters of the globe, it would sweeten their path and add to their happiness. He trusted that his words, poor as they were, would sink into their hearts, and remain on their memories, long after they had forgotten the speaker. He hoped they would remember the words of their reverend friend, who had just implored the blessing of God upon their studies, for they were the outpourings of the soul of one not young in years, nor void of experi-

ence; and when they were come to manhood, they might say to their children, 'Thus and thus were we taught, and thus and thus we teach you. By attending to these things we rose to honour and distinction.' Happy (said Sir Walter) will it be if you can say, 'I have followed that which I heard.' May you do so and live!"

The Academy, opened under these auspices, throve from the beginning, and may now be considered as one of the most important among the national establishments of Scotland; nor have Sir Walter's anticipations as to the result of honourable rivalry between it and the old High School been disappointed.

As it happens, I have to place in the same page with Sir Walter's speech in honour of classical learning, the record of a *false quantity* which his generosity may almost be said to have made classical. In the course of that same October, died his faithful friend and servant Maida, the noblest and most celebrated of all his dogs — might I not safely say, of all dogs that ever shared the fellowship of man? His exit was announced in this letter to the young Oxonian: —

"*To Charles Scott, Esq., Brazen-nose College, Oxford.*

"Abbotsford, 22d October 1824.

"My Dear Charles, — I am glad to hear that you are safely settled at College, I trust with the intention of making your residence there subservient to the purposes of steady study, without which it will only be a waste of expense and of leisure. I believe the matter depends very much on a youth himself, and therefore I hope to hear that you are strenuously exerting yourself to hold an honourable situation among the students of your celebrated university. Your course will not be unmarked, as something is expected from the son of any

literary person; and I sincerely hope in this case those expectations will be amply gratified.

"I am obliged to Mr. Hughes* for his kind intentions in your favour, as I dare say that any to whom he introduces you will be acquaintance worth cultivating. I shall be glad to hear that you have taken up your ground at College, and who are like to compose your set. I hope you will make your way to the clever fellows, and not put up with Doldrums. Every man soon falls behind, that does not aspire to keep up with the foremost in the race.

"I have little domestic news to tell you. Old Maida died quietly in his straw last week, after a good supper, which, considering his weak state, was rather a deliverance. He is buried below his monument, on which the following epitaph is engraved — though it is great audacity to send Teviotdale Latin to Brazen-nose —

'Maidæ Marmoreâ dormis sub imagine Maida,
Ad januam domini sit tibi terra levis.'

"Thus Englished by an eminent hand —

'Beneath the sculptured form which late you wore,
Sleep soundly, Maida, at your master's door.'

"Yesterday we had our solemn hunt, and killed fourteen hares, — but a dog of Sir Adam's broke her leg, and was obliged to be put to death in the field. Little Johnnie talks the strangest gibberish I ever heard, by way of repeating his little poems. I wish the child may ever speak plain. Mamma, Sophia, Anne, and I, send love. — Always your affectionate father, WALTER SCOTT."

* John Hughes, Esq. of Oriel College — son of Sir Walter's old friends, Dr. and Mrs. Hughes — the same whose *Itinerary of the Rhone* is mentioned with high praise in the Introduction to *Quentin Durward*. — In a poem by Mr. Hughes, entitled *Walter Childe*, published in 1838, the reader will find an elegant and affectionate tribute to Sir Walter Scott's memory. See *Bentley's Miscellany*, No. xvii. p. 433.

The monument here mentioned was a *leaping-on-stone*, to which the skill of Scott's master-mason had given the shape of Maida recumbent. It had stood by the gate of Abbotsford a year or more before the dog died, and after he was laid under it, his master, dining that evening at Chiefswood, said, over his glass of toddy and cigar, that he had been bothering his brains to make an epitaph for his ancient favourite, but could not please himself. He said it must be in Latin, because *Maida* seemed made on purpose to close a hexameter — and begged, as I was fresher off the irons than himself, that I would try to help him. The unfortunate couplet above printed was what suggested itself at the moment — and though his own English version of it, extemporized next minute, was so much better, on his way home he gave directions to have it engraved, and engraved it was before many hours had passed. Mr. James Ballantyne was the first person that saw it; believing it to be Scott's, he admired it, of course — and of course, also, he thought fit to print it soon after (as Sir Walter's) in his newspaper — but his memory had played him a trick before he reached Edinburgh, and as he printed the lines they showed not only their original blunder, but another of his own creation; he had put *jaces* for *dormis*. His printing the thing at all was unfortunate; for some friend (I believe it was Lord Minto) had pointed out in the interim the false quantity of *januam*, and the mason was just about to rectify that by substituting some legitimate dactyl or spondee, suggested by this critic, when the newspaper reached Abbotsford. Sir Walter on seeing it said, — "Well, well, since Ballantyne has printed the lines at all, I shan't have any corrections made here — I shall write and tell him of

his blunder, and let the other stand as it is." But meantime "*Sir Walter Scott's false quantities*" had headed various paragraphs in the newspapers both in Edinburgh and in London; and, strange to say, even the undoubted double blunder of Ballantyne's edition found gallant defenders. A Mr. Lionel Berguer, who, I think, had published some poems, and dedicated them to Scott, was one of these champions: and Sir Walter himself had twice pleaded guilty in the newspapers, before the matter was allowed to rest. It is sufficient to quote the following:—

"*To the Editor of the Morning Post.*

"Abbotsford, Nov. 12, 1824.

"Sir,—As I am a friend to truth, even in trifles, I cannot consent to shelter myself under the classical mantle which Mr. Lionel Berguer and some unknown friend have chosen to extend, in their charity, over my faults in prosody. The two lines were written in mere whim, and without the least intention of their being made public. In the first line, the word *jaces* is a mistake of the transcriber (whoever took that trouble;) the phrase is *dormis*, which I believe is good prosody. The error in the second line, *ad januam*, certainly exists, and I bow to the castigation. I must plead the same apology which was used by the great Dr. Johnson, when he misinterpreted a veterinary phrase of ordinary occurrence — "ignorance — pure ignorance" was the cause of my blunder. Forty years ago, longs and shorts were little attended to in Scottish education; and I have, it appears, forgot the little I may then have learned. I have only to add, that I am far from undervaluing any branch of scholarship because I have not the good fortune to possess it, and heartily wish that those who succeed us may have the benefit of a more accurate classical education than was common in my earlier days.

"The inscription cannot now be altered; but if it remains

a memorial of my want of learning, it shall not, in addition, convey any imputation on my candour. I should have been ashamed, at a more stirring time, to ask admission for this plea of guilty; but at present you may think it worth a place in your paper. *Pugna est de paupere regno.* — I remain your obedient servant, WALTER SCOTT."

The culprit whose sin had brought this controversy on Sir Walter, was not in his vicinity when it was going on — nor cognizant of it until he had committed himself; and on the same 12th of November, being the Poet's last day at Abbotsford for the long vacation, he indited the following rhymes — which savour of his recent overhauling of Swift and Sheridan's doggrel epistles.

" *To J. G. Lockhart, Esq., Northumberland Street, Edinburgh.*

" Dear John, — I some time ago wrote to inform his
Fat worship of *jaces*, misprinted for *dormis;*
But that several Southrons assured me the *januam*
Was a twitch to both ears of Ass Priscian's cranium.
You, perhaps, may observe that one Lionel Berguer,
In defence of our blunder appears a stout arguer.
But at length I have settled, I hope, all these clatters,
By a *rowt* in the papers — fine place for such matters.
I have, therefore, to make it for once my command, sir,
That my gudeson shall leave the whole thing in my hand, sir,
And by no means accomplish what James says you threaten,
Some banter in Blackwood to claim your dog-Latin.
I have various reasons of weight, on my word, sir,
For pronouncing a step of this sort were absurd, sir. —
Firstly, erudite sir, 'twas against your advising
I adopted the lines this monstrosity lies in;
For you modestly hinted my English translation
Would become better far such a dignified station.
Second — how, in God's name, would my bacon be saved,
By not having writ what I clearly engraved?
On the contrary, I, on the whole, think it better
To be whipped as the thief, than his lousy resetter.
Thirdly — don't you perceive that I don't care a boddle
Although fifty false metres were flung at my noddle,

For my back is as broad and as hard as Benlomon's,
And I treat as I please both the Greeks and the Romans;
Whereas the said heathens might rather look serious
At a kick on their drum from the scribe of Valerius.
And, fourthly and lastly — it is my good pleasure
To remain the sole source of that murderous measure.
So *stet pro ratione voluntas* — be tractile,
Invade not, I say, my own dear little dactyl;
If you do, you'll occasion a breach in our intercourse:
To-morrow will see me in town for the winter-course,
But not at your door, at the usual hour, sir,
My own pye-house daughter's good prog to devour, sir.
Ergo — peace! — on your duty, your squeamishness throttle,
And we'll soothe Priscian's spleen with a canny third bottle.
A fig for all dactyls, a fig for all spondees,
A fig for all dunces and dominie Grundys;
A fig for dry thrapples, south, north, east, and west, sir,
Speates and raxes * ere five for a famishing guest, sir;
And as Fatsman † and I have some topics for haver, he'll
Be invited, I hope, to meet me and Dame Peveril,
Upon whom, to say nothing of Oury and Anne, you a
Dog shall be deemed if you fasten your *Janua*.

"P. S. — *Hoc jocose* — but I am nevertheless in literal earnest. You incur my serious displeasure if you move one inch in this contemptible rumpus. So adieu till to-morrow. — Yours affectionately, W. S."

* There is an excellent story (but too long for quotation) in the *Memorie of the Somervilles* (vol. i. p. 240) about an old Lord of that family, who, when he wished preparations to be made for high feasting at his Castle of Cowthally, used to send on a billet inscribed with this laconic phrase, "*Speates and raxes*," — i. e. *spits and ranges*. Upon one occasion, Lady Somerville (being newly married, and not yet skilled in her husband's hieroglyphics) read the mandate as *spears and jacks*, and sent forth 200 armed horsemen, whose appearance on the moors greatly alarmed Lord Somerville and his guest, who happened to be no less a person than King James III. — See Scott's *Miscellaneous Prose*, (Edin. Ed.) vol. xxii. p. 312.

† *Fatsman* was one of Mr. James Ballantyne's many *aliases*. Another (to which Constable mostly adhered) was "Mr. Basketfill" — an allusion to the celebrated printer Baskerville.

In the course of that November several of the huge antique buildings, which gave its peculiar character to the Old Town of Edinburgh, perished by fire; and no one, it may be believed, witnessed this demolition with more regret than Sir Walter. He says to Lord Montagu, on the 18th, —

"My Dear Lord, — Since I came here I have witnessed a horrible calamity. A fire broke out on Monday night in the High Street, raged all night, and great part of the next day, catching to the steeple of the Tron Church, which being wood was soon in a blaze, and burned like regular fire-works till all was consumed. All this while the flames were spreading down to the Cowgate amongst those closes where the narrowness of the access, and the height of the houses, rendered the approach of engines almost impossible. On Tuesday night, a *second* fire broke out in the Parliament Square, greatly endangering the Courts of Justice, and the Advocates' more than princely Library. By great exertions it was prevented approaching this public building; and Sir William Forbes' bank also escaped. But all the other houses in the Parliament Square are totally destroyed; and I can conceive no sight more grand or terrible, than to see these lofty buildings on fire from top to bottom, vomiting out flames like a volcano from every aperture, and finally crashing down one after another into an abyss of fire, which resembled nothing but hell; for there were vaults of wine and spirits which sent up huge jets of flame, whenever they were called into activity by the fall of these massive fragments. Between the corner of the Parliament Square and the South Bridge, all is destroyed excepting some new buildings at the lower extremity; and the devastation has extended down the closes, which I hope will never be rebuilt on their present — I should say their *late* form. The general distress is, of course, dreadful. — Ever yours, W. Scott.'

CHAPTER LXI.

Tales of the Crusaders begun — A Christmas at Abbotsford, in Extracts from the MS. Journal of Captain Basil Hall, R. N.

DEC. 29, 1824 — JAN. 10, 1825.

DURING the Winter Session of his Court, Sir Walter resumed his usual course of literary exertion, which the supervision of carpenters, painters, and upholsterers, had so long interrupted. The Tales of the Crusaders were begun; but I defer, for the present, the history of their progress.

Abbotsford was at last finished, and in all its splendour; and at Christmas, a larger party than the house could ever before have accommodated, were assembled there. Among the guests was one who kept a copious journal during his stay, and has kindly furnished me with a copy of it. I shall, therefore, extract such passages as bear immediately upon Sir Walter Scott himself, who certainly was never subjected to sharper observation than that of his ingenious friend Captain Basil Hall.

EXTRACTS FROM CAPTAIN HALL'S JOURNAL.

"Abbotsford, December 29, 1824.

"This morning my brother James and I set out from Edinburgh in the Blucher coach at eight o'clock, and although we

heard of snow-storms on the hills, we bowled along without the smallest impediment, and with a fine bright sun and cheerful green fields around us, with only here and there a distant streak of snow in some shady ravine. We arrived in good time — and found several other guests at dinner. . . . . .

"The public rooms are lighted with oil-gas in a style of extraordinary splendour. The passages, also, and the bedrooms, are lighted in a similar manner. The whole establishment is on the same footing — I mean the attendance and entertainment — all is in good order, and an air of punctuality and method, without any waste or ostentation, pervades everything. Every one seems at his ease; and although I have been in some big houses in my time, and amongst good folks who studied these sort of points not a little, I don't remember to have anywhere met with things better managed in all respects.

"Had I a hundred pens, each of which at the same time should separately write down an anecdote, I could not hope to record one half of those which our host, to use Spenser's expression, 'welled out alway.' To write down one or two, or one or two dozen, would serve no purpose, as they were all appropriate to the moment, and were told with a tone, gesture, and look, suited exactly to the circumstances, but which it is of course impossible in the least degree to describe.

"Abbotsford, 30th December.

"This morning Major Stisted, my brother, and I, accompanied Sir Walter Scott on a walk over his grounds, a distance of five or six miles. He led us through his plantations, which are in all stages of advancement, and entertained us all the way with an endless string of anecdotes, more or less characteristic of the scenes we were passing through. Occasionally he repeated snatches of songs, sometimes a whole ballad, and at other times he planted his staff in the ground and related some tale to us, which, though not in verse, came like a stream of poetry from his lips. Thus, about the middle

of our walk, we had first to cross, and then to wind down the banks of the Huntly Burn, the scene of old Thomas the Rymer's interview with the Queen of the Fairies. Before entering this little glen, he detained us on the heath above till he had related the whole of that romantic story, so that by the time we descended the path, our imaginations were so worked upon by the wild nature of the fiction, and still more by the animation of the narrator, that we felt ourselves treading upon classical ground; and though the day was cold, the path muddy and scarcely passable, owing to the late floods, and the trees all bare, yet I do not remember ever to have seen any place so interesting as the skill of this mighty magician had rendered this narrow ravine, which in any other company would have seemed quite insignificant.

"On reaching an elevated point near a wild mountain lake, from whence we commanded a view of many different parts of his estate, and saw the progress of his improvements, I remarked that it must be interesting to engage in planting. 'Interesting!' he cried; 'You can have no idea of the exquisite delight of a planter — he is like a painter laying on his colours — at every moment he sees his effects coming out. There is no art or occupation comparable to this; it is full of past, present, and future enjoyment. I look back to the time when there was not a tree here, only bare heath; I look round and see thousands of trees growing up, all of which, I may say almost each of which, have received my personal attention. I remember five years ago looking forward, with the most delighted expectation, to this very hour, and as each year has passed, the expectation has gone on increasing. I do the same now: I anticipate what this plantation and that one will presently be, if only taken care of, and there is not a spot of which I do not watch the progress. Unlike building, or even painting, or indeed any other kind of pursuit, this has no end, and is never interrupted, but goes on from day to day, and from year to year, with a perpetually augmenting interest. Farming I hate; what have I to do with fattening and killing beasts, or raising corn only to cut it down, and to wrangle

with farmers about prices, and to be constantly at the mercy of the seasons? There can be no such disappointments or annoyances in planting trees.'

"It is impossible to touch for an instant on any theme, but straightway he has an anecdote to fit it. 'What is the name of that bright spot,' I said, 'on which the sun is shining, just there in the line of Cowdenknowes?'—'That,' said he, 'is called *Hazel Cleugh*. I was long puzzled,' he added, 'to find the etymology of this name, and inquired in vain on every hand to discover something suitable. I could learn nothing more than that near the Cleugh there was a spot which tradition said had been a Druidical place of worship. Still this did not help me, and I went on for a long time tormenting myself to no purpose. At length, when I was reading very early one fine summer's morning, I accidently lighted upon a passage in some German book, which stated that Haxa was the old German term for a Druidess.* Here, then, the mystery was solved, and I was so enchanted with the discovery, that I was wild with impatience to tell it to some one; so away I mounted up stairs to my wife's room, where she was lying fast asleep. I was well aware that she neither knew nor cared one jot about the matter; that did not signify — tell it I must immediately to some one; so I roused her up, and although she was very angry at being awakened out of her comfortable doze, I insisted upon bestowing Haxa, and Haxel Cleugh, and all my beautiful discovery of the Druid's temple upon her notwithstanding. Now, don't you understand this?' said he, turning to me — 'Have not you sometimes on board your ship hit upon something which delighted you, so that you could not rest till you had got hold of some one down whose throat you might cram it — some stupid dolt of a lieutenant, or some gaping midshipman, on whom in point of fact it was totally thrown away? — but still you had the satisfaction of imparting it, without which half the pleasure is lost.'

"Thus we strolled along, borne as it were on this strange

* *Hexe* is modern German for *witch*.

stream of song and story. Nothing came amiss to him; the most trivial and commonplace incident, when turned in his hand, acquired a polish and a clearness of the first water. Over all, too, there was breathed an air of benignity and good-will to all men, which was no less striking than the eloquence and point of his narrations. The manner in which he spoke of his neighbours, and of distant persons of whose conduct he disapproved, was all in the same spirit. He did not cloak their faults — he spoke out manfully in contempt of what was wrong; but this was always accompanied by some kindly observation, some reservation in favour of the good they possessed, some natural and proper allowance. I say natural, because I should be giving a wrong impression of the character of his conversation, were I to let it be supposed that these excuses or extenuations were mawkishly uttered, or that he acted a part, and as a matter of rule said something in favour even of those he condemned. . . . . .

"He is loyal to the back-bone, to use a vulgar phrase; but with all this there is nothing servile or merely personal in his loyalty. When the King was coming to Edinburgh, and it was known he was to pass over Waterloo Bridge, a gentleman suggested to him the fitness of concealing or erasing the inscription respecting Prince Leopold * on the arch of the bridge, as it was known there was a coolness between the King and his son-in-law. 'What!' said he, 'shall we insult the King's son-in-law, and through him the King himself, by any allusion to, or notice of, what is so unworthy of all parties? Shall we be ashamed of our own act, and without any diminution of our respect for those to whom the compliment was paid, draw back and eat our words because we have heard of a petty misunderstanding? Shall we undo that, which our respect for the King and his family alone prompted us, right or wrong, to do? No, sir! sooner than that inscrip-

* Prince Leopold had been present at the opening of this bridge — and the inscription records that circumstance.

tion should be erased, or even covered with flags or flowers, as you propose, or that anything, in short, should be done to show that we were ashamed of our respect for Prince Leopold, or sought to save the King's feelings by a sacrifice of our own dignity, I would with my own hand set the town of Edinburgh on fire, and destroy it!' . . . . . .

"In the evening we had a great feast indeed. Sir Walter asked us if we had ever read Christabel, and upon some of us admitting with shame that we had never even seen it, he offered to read it, and took a chair in the midst of all the party in the library. He read the poem from end to end with a wonderful pathos and variety of expression — in some parts his voice was deep and sonorous, at others loud and animated, but all most carefully appropriate, and very sweetly modulated. In his hands, at all events, Christabel justified Lord Byron's often-quizzed character of it — 'a wild and singularly original and beautiful poem.'

"Sir Walter also read us, with the utmost delight, or, as it is called, completely *con amore*, the famous poem on Thomas the Rhymer's adventure with the Queen of the Fairies; but I am at a loss to say which was the most interesting, or even I will say poetical — his conversational account of it to us to-day on the very spot, Huntly Burn, or the highly characteristic ballad which he read to us in the evening.*

"Interspersed with these various readings were hundreds of stories, some quaint, some pathetical — some wild and fairy-like, and not a few warlike, especially of the old times, and now and then one of Wellington and Waterloo; and sometimes he gave anecdotes of things close to his own doors, — ay, and incidents of this very day, which we had passed unseen, but which were now kindled into interest and importance, as if by the touch of a magician's wand.

"There was also much pleasing singing — many old ballads, and many pretending to be old ballads, were sung to the

* See this ballad in the *Border Minstrelsy*, vol. iv.

harp and pianoforte. The following is so exquisitely pathetic, that I copied it, after I went to my room, from the young lady's book, and give it a place, though perhaps it is to be found somewhere in print:—

'My love he built me a bonnie bower,' &c. &c. *

"Abbotsford, 31st December 1824.

"The fashion of keeping up old holidays by bonfires and merriment, is surely decreasing. Or is it that we, the recorders of these things, are getting older, and take consequently less interest in what no longer amuses us, so that we may be deceived in supposing the taste of our juniors to be altered, while in fact it is only our own dispositions and habits that are changed in complexion? It may be so — still I suspect that the progress of education, and the new habits of industry, and the more varied and generous objects which have been opened of late years to all classes, have tended greatly to banish those idle ceremonies and jovialities which I can just recollect in my childhood as being of doubtful pleasure, but which our ancestors describe as being near the summit of their enjoyments. Be this as it may in the eyes of others, I confess, for my part, that your Christmas and New-years' parties seem generally dull. There are several causes for this: The mere circumstance of being brought together for the express purpose of being merry, acts in opposition to the design in view; no one is pleased on compulsion; then it seldom happens that a party is quite well sorted; and a third reason is, that it will scarcely ever happen that a family circle can be drawn together on two successive years, without betraying to the eye of affection some fatal blanks 'that were not there before.'

"I took notice at supper, as we waited for the moment that was to give birth to a new year, that there was more than one 'unquiet drooping of the eye;' and amidst the constrained

* See *The Border Widow's Lament*, in the *Minstrelsy*, vol. iii. pp. 94-7.

hilarity of the hour I could trace a faltering in some voices, which told distinctly enough to an ear that was watching for it, that however present the smiling cheek and laughing eye might seem to be, the bleeding heart was far away.*

"It is true enough that it is to 'moralize too deeply' to take things in this way, and to conjure up with an ingenuity of self-annoyance these blighting images. So it is, and so I acted; and as *my* heart was light and unloaded with any care, I exerted myself to carry through the ponderous evening — ponderous only because it was one set apart to be light and gay. I danced reels like a wild man, snapped my fingers, and hallooed with the best of them, flirted with the young ladies at all hazards — and with the elder ones, of which there was a store, I talked and laughed finely. As a suite of rooms was open, various little knots were formed, and nothing would have been nicer had we been left alone, but we must needs be dancing, singing, playing, jesting, or something or other different from that which we might be naturally disposed to be doing. Wherever the Great Unknown went, indeed, there was a sort of halo of fun and intelligence around him; but his plan of letting all things *bide* was not caught up somehow, and we were *shoved* about more than enough.

"Supper was over just at midnight, and as the clock was striking twelve, we all stood up, after drinking a hearty bumper to the old year, and having joined hands cross-wise, each with his right hand seizing his neighbour's left, all joined chorus in an appropriate song by Sir Adam Ferguson, a worthy knight, possessed of infinite drollery. Then followed other toasts of a loyal description, and then a song, a good red-hot Jacobite song *to the King*† — a ditty which, a century ago, might have cost the company their heads, or at least their hands — but now it did no more than draw broad smiles of

* The widow and daughters of the poet's brother, Mr. Thomas Scott, were of the party.

† "Here's to the King, boys,
Ye ken wha I mean, boys," &c. &c.
See Hogg's *Jacobite Relics.*

affected apprehension, and that roguish sort of look natural when people are innocently employed in doing what is held to be mischievous, but harms no one.

"Still, still it was ponderous. Not all the humour and miraculous vivacity and readiness of our host could save it — long blank pauses occurred — and then a feeble whisper — but little more, and the roar of a jolly toast subsided into a hollow calm. I dwell upon all this merely to make people consider how useless it is to get up such things now-a-days — for if Walter Scott, with all appliances and means to boot — in his noble house — surrounded by his own choice friends — full of health and all he can wish, is unable to exempt a Hogmanay party from the soporific effect proverbially attendant upon manufactured happiness, who else need venture on the experiment? At about one we broke up, and every one seemed rejoiced to be allowed to go about at pleasure: while the horses were putting to, to carry off our numerous company, and shawls were hunting for, people became bright again, and not being called upon to act any part, fell instantly into good-humour; and we had more laughing and true hilarity in the last half hour than in all the evening before. The Author of Waverley himself seemed to feel the reviving influence of freedom, and cruized about from group to group, firing in a shot occasionally to give spirit to what was going on, and then *hauling off* to engage with some other — to show his stores of old armour — his numerous old carved oak cabinets, filled with the strangest things — adder-stones of magical power — fairies' rings — pearls of price, and amongst the rest a mourning ring of poor Lord Byron's, securely stowed away in one of the inmost drawers!

"On one of those roving expeditions he pushed his head into the circle of which I happened to make one, and seizing upon some casual analogy, said, 'that reminds me of a story of a fair, fair lady,' &c. All became mute and crowded about him, and he began, in a low, solemn, and very impressive voice, with a sort of mock earnestness which fixed the attention in a wonderful degree, and gave an air of truth and im-

portance to what he was telling, as if it were some material fact which he had to communicate for our serious consideration. 'There was,' said he, 'a very merry party collected in a town in France, and amongst all the gay lords and ladies there assembled, there was none who caused so great a sensation, as a beautiful young lady who danced, played, and sang in the most exquisite style. There were only two unaccountable circumstances belonging to her — one was, that she never went to church, or attended family prayers; the other, that she always wore a slender black velvet band or girdle round her waist. She was often asked about these peculiarities, but she always evaded the interrogatories, and still by her amiable manners and beauty won all hearts. One evening, in a dance, her partner saw an opportunity of pulling the loop of her little black girdle behind; it fell to the ground, and immediately the lady became pale as a sheet — then gradually shrunk and shrunk — till at length nothing was to be seen in her place but a small heap of grey ashes!' . . . . . .

"I forgot to mention that in the course of a conversation about ghosts, fears in the dark, and such matters, Sir Walter mentioned having once arrived at a country inn, when he was told there was no bed for him. 'No place to lie down at all?' said he. 'No,' said the people of the house — 'none, except a room in which there is a corpse lying.' 'Well,' said he, 'did the person die of any contagious disorder?' 'Oh no — not at all,' said they. 'Well, then,' continued he, 'let me have the other bed. — So,' said Sir Walter, 'I laid me down, and never had a better night's sleep in my life.'

"Abbotsford, January 1, 1825.

"Yesterday being Hogmanay, there was a constant succession of *Guisards* — *i. e.* boys dressed up in fantastic caps, with their shirts over their jackets, and with wooden swords in their hands. These players acted a sort of scene before us, of which the hero was one Goloshin, who gets killed in a 'battle for love,' but is presently brought to life again by a doctor of the party.

"As may be imagined, the taste of our host is to keep up these old ceremonies. Thus, in the morning, yesterday, I observed crowds of boys and girls coming to the back door, where each one got a penny and an oaten-cake. No less than 70 pennies were thus distributed — and very happy the little bodies looked, with their well-stored bags.

"People accustomed to the planting of trees are well aware how grateful the rising generations of the forest are to the hand which thins and prunes them. And it makes one often melancholy to see what a destructive sort of waste and retardation goes on by the neglect of young woods — how much beauty is lost — how much wealth is wantonly thrown away, and what an air of sluttishness is given to scenery which, with a very little trouble, might have adorned and embellished, not to say enriched, many a great estate.

"I never saw this mischievous effect of indolence more conspicuously made manifest than in a part of the grounds here. Sir Walter's property on one side is bounded by a belt of fir trees, say twenty yards across. The 'march' runs directly along the centre of this belt, so that one-half of the trees belong to his neighbour, the other to him. The moment he came in possession he set about thinning and pruning the trees, and planting a number of hardwood shoots under the shelter of the firs. In a very short time the effect was evident: the trees, heretofore choked up, had run into scraggy stems, and were sadly stunted in growth; but having now room to breathe and to take exercise, they have shot up in the course of a few years in a wonderful manner, and have set out branches on all sides, while their trunks have gradually lost the walking-stick or hop-pole aspect which they were forced to assume before, and the beeches and oaks and other recent trees are starting up vigorously under the genial influence of their owner's care. Meanwhile the obstinate, indolent, or ignorant possessor of the other half of the belt, has done nothing to his woods for many years, and the growth is apparently at a stand in its original ugliness and uselessness. The trees are none of them above half the height of Sir Walter's, and few, if any,

of half the diameter. So very remarkable is the difference, that without the most positive assurances I could not believe it possible that it could have been brought about by mere care in so short a period as five years. The trees on the one side are quite without value, either to make fences or to sell as supports to the coal-pits near Berwick, while Sir Walter already reaps a great profit from the mere thinning out of his plantations. To obtain such results, it will be easily understood that much personal attention is necessary, much method and knowledge of the subject. It happens, however, that in this very attention he finds his chief pleasure — he is a most exact and punctual man of business, and has made it his favourite study to acquire a thorough knowledge of the art.

"His excellent taste in planting has produced a very important effect. In laying out his plantations, he was guided, partly by a feeling that it was natural and beautiful to follow the 'lie of the ground,' as it is called, and partly by an idea that by leading his young wood along hollows and gentle slopes, he would be taking the surest course to give it shelter. But though he had only the prosperity and picturesqueness of the wood in view, he has also, he finds, added to the value of the adjoining fields that remain unplanted. The person who formerly rented one farm came to him and offered to take the unplanted part again, and to pay the same rent for it as he had paid originally for the whole, although one-half of it is now a young forest, and effectually enclosed. On Sir Walter's expressing his surprise at this, the man said that, both for growing corn and for the pasture of sheep, the land was infinitely improved in value by the protection which his rising woods and numerous enclosures afforded.

"This will seem still more remarkable when it is mentioned that, whenever circumstances permitted, his best land has been selected for planting trees. 'I have no patience,' he exclaimed, 'with those people who consider that a tree is not to be placed except on a soil where nothing else will grow. Why should the noblest of all vegetables be condemned to the worst soil? After all, it is the most productive policy to give

trees every advantage, even in a pecuniary point of view, as I have just shown you. The immediate return in cash is not so great indeed as from wheat, but it is eventually as sure, if matters be properly attended to — and this is all over and above one's great and constantly increasing source of enjoyment in the picturesque beauty which rising woods afford.

"Abbotsford, January 2, 1825.

"At breakfast to-day we had, as usual, some 150 stories — God knows how they came in, but he is, in the matter of anecdote, what Hudibras was in figures of speech — 'his mouth he could not ope — but out there flew a trope' — so with the Great Unknown, his mouth he cannot open without giving out something worth hearing — and all so simply, good-naturedly, and naturally! I quite forget all these stories but one: — 'My cousin Watty Scott,' said he, 'was a midshipman some forty years ago in a ship at Portsmouth; he and two other companions had gone on shore, and had overstaid their leave, spent all their money, and run up an immense bill at a tavern on the Point — the ship made the signal for sailing, but their landlady said, "No, gentlemen — you shall not escape without paying your reckoning;" — and she accompanied her words by appropriate actions, and placed them under the tender keeping of a sufficient party of bailiffs. They felt that they were in a scrape, and petitioned very hard to be released. "No, no," said Mrs. Quickly, "I must be satisfied one way or t'other: you must be well aware, gentlemen, that you will be totally ruined if you don't get on board in time." They made long faces, and confessed that it was but too true. "Well," said she, "I'll give you one chance — I am so circumstanced here that I cannot carry on my business as a single woman, and I must contrive somehow to have a husband, or at all events I must be able to produce a marriage certificate; and therefore the only terms on which you shall all three have leave to go on board to-morrow morning is, that one of you consent to marry me. I don't care a d—— which it is, but, by all that's holy, one of you I will

have, or else you all three go to jail, and your ship sails without you!" The virago was not to be pacified, and the poor youths, left to themselves, agreed after a time to draw lots, and it happened to fall on my cousin. No time was lost, and off they marched to church, and my poor relative was forthwith spliced. The bride, on returning, gave them a good substantial dinner and several bottles of wine a-piece, and having tumbled them into a wherry, sent them off. The ship sailed, and the young men religiously adhered to the oath of secrecy they had taken previous to drawing lots. The bride, I should have said, merely wanted to be married, and was the first to propose an eternal separation. Some months after, at Jamaica, a file of papers reached the midshipmen's berth, and Watty, who was observed to be looking over them carelessly, reading an account of a robbery and murder at Portsmouth, suddenly jumped up, in his ecstasy forgot his obligation of secrecy, and cried out, "Thanks be to God, my wife is hanged!"'

"Mixed up with all this fun, Sir Walter has much admirable good sense, and makes many valuable reflections, which are apt sometimes to escape notice from the unpretending manner in which they are introduced. Talking of different professions to-day, and of the universal complaint of each one being overstocked, he observed — 'Ay, ay, it is the same in all: we wear our teeth out in the hard drudgery of the outset, and at length when we do get bread to eat, we complain that the crust is hard; so that in neither case are we satisfied.'

"Taking up a book with a pompous dedication to the King, he read the first paragraph, in which the style was inverted in such a manner as scarcely to be intelligible, but yet was so oddly turned as to excite curiosity. 'Now, this,' he said, 'is just like a man coming into a room bottom foremost in order to excite attention: he ought to be kicked for his pains.'

"Speaking of books and booksellers, he remarked that, considered generally, an author might be satisfied if he got one-sixth part of the retail price of his book for his share of the

profits; — this seems very moderate — but who should have such means of making a right calculation on such a point?

"Some conversation arose about stranger tourists, and I learned that Sir Walter had at length been very reluctantly obliged to put a stop to the inundation of these people, by sending an intimation to the inns at Melrose and Selkirk to stop them, by a message saying it was not convenient to receive company at Abbotsford, unless their visit had been previously announced and accepted. Before this, the house used to be literally stormed: no less than *sixteen* parties, all uninvited, came in one day — and frequently eight or ten forced themselves in; so that it became impossible for the family to have a moment to themselves. The tourists roved about the house, touched and displaced the armour, and I dare say (though this was not admitted) many and many a set carried off some trophy with them.

"Just as breakfast was concluded to-day he said, 'Ladies and gentlemen, I shall read prayers at eleven, when I expect you all to attend.' He did not treat the subject as if ashamed of it, which some do. He did not say, 'those who please may come, and any one who likes may stay away,' as I have often heard. He read the Church of England service, and did it with singular beauty and impressiveness, varying his voice according to the subject; and as the first lesson was from a very poetical part of Isaiah, he kindled up, and read it with a great deal of animation, without, however, overstepping the solemnity of the occasion.

"We had an amusing instance of his playfulness this evening. Something introduced the subject of lions. 'Well,' said he, 'I think it amusing enough to be a lion: what think you, Captain Hall?' 'Oh,' I answered, 'I am always too much flattered by it — and nothing gratifies me more than being made to wag my tail and roar in my small way.' 'That's right,' he said, turning to the company; 'nothing is more diverting than being handed about in that way, and for my part I enjoy it exceedingly. I was once hunted by a well-known lion-catcher, who I found was also in search of Miss

O'Neill, and it so chanced that we met together at Highgate, or in that neighbourhood, and we were carried out to see some grounds, in the course of which both the lion and the lioness found themselves in a place where there was an iron railing all round. "Now," said I, "if you have got a lock there to turn upon us, you have us both for ever, and your fortune is made. You have only to hoist a flag on a pole at the top of the hill, and stick up a few bills, saying that you have just caught those two beautiful animals, and in an hour's time you have half the metropolis to see us at a shilling a-head, and we shall roar in grand style — shall we not, Miss O'Neill?"'

"He then laughed much at some lions about town, who disdained being stirred up with a long pole, as every good lion ought to be. 'You and I, Captain Hall, know better, and we enjoy ourselves accordingly in our noble-beast capacity; — whereas those poor wretches lose all the good things we get — because, forsooth, they must be loved and admired, and made much of for their mere *human* qualities — while we are content with our pretensions as monsters!'

"Abbotsford, January 3.

"There has been an immense flood in the Tweed lately, which overflowed its banks, and did a world of mischief, though not quite so great as that at St. Petersburgh. But what is comical, this rise of the river actually set Abbotsford on fire: at least the offices on the *haugh* below the house, where the water rose three feet perpendicular above the floor; and happening to encounter a pile of unslaked lime in the corner of a cow-house, presently set it in a blaze! There was no want of water, you may be sure — 'too much of water, poor Ophelia' — and no great damage was done. This flood raised the water considerably more than a foot — exactly three inches higher than that of 1812, the highest ever known up to that date.

"A neighbouring laird and his son joined our party yesterday, Mr. Henderson of Eildon Hall, and the proprietor of the

well-known hills of that name. His history may amuse you. He was, long ago, clerk of the Cocket at Leith, an office worth £50 a-year, and this was his whole substance. It chanced that Mr. Ramsay, the banker, was in want of a clerk, and said to a friend, 'Do you know any one who writes a good hand, is honest and steady, and who never opens his mouth from one year's end to the other?' 'I know your man exactly,' said the other; and Mr. H. was accordingly made clerk under Mr. Ramsay, with whom he kept up the necessary communication by means of a sort of telegraph, as it is alleged, as Mr. R. had a great dislike to speech. In process of time our hero insinuated himself so completely into the good graces of his patron that he got a small share in the bank, then a larger, and so on. It happened about this time that the man who had taken Craigleith quarry failed for want of capital; and our friend, the silent clerk of the Cocket, who had the bank under his lee, bought up the contract, and cleared ten thousand a-year for nine or ten years by this one job. So that what with the bank, and sundry other speculations, which all turned out well, he amassed great wealth, and resolved to turn country gentleman.

"One day in company he was making inquiries about land, and a gentleman opposite was so eloquent in praise of Eildon Hall, then in the market, that he was seized with a desire to be the purchaser. 'What is the price?' asked he. 'Why,' said the other, 'I dare say you may get it for forty thousand pounds.' 'Indeed!' said our quarryman, 'I will give that with pleasure — and I authorize you to make the offer.'

"Now, the amusing thing about this transaction is, that the estate in question had been some time advertised for sale for thirty-seven thousand pounds only; thus our worthy friend of the telegraph gave three thousand more for the property than was asked, to the great delight and astonishment of Messrs. Todd and Romanes, the agents for the sale. A fact, by the way, which goes far to support the Lord Chancellor's estimate of a banker's intellects.

"With all this, our taciturn friend makes 'a very decent

lord,' is well esteemed in the neighbourhood, and, as he has the discretion now to take good advice, he is likely to do well.

"Sir Adam Fergusson, who is the most humorous man alive, and delights in showing up his neighbour, mentioned to him the other day that the Eildon estate was sadly in want of lime. 'Eh!' said the laird, 'I am much obliged to you for that hint — I am just ruined for want o' hints!'

"At this moment there is a project for making a railway from Berwick to Kelso, as all the world knows; but the Great Unknown and several other gentlemen are anxious to tail on a branch from Melrose to meet the great one; and as Mr. H., with his long purse and his willingness to receive hints, is no bad card in the game, he has been brought up to Abbotsford for a week: his taciturnity has long ago fled, and he is now one of the most loquacious Borderers going. Torwoodlee, too, and his son the Skipper, came to breakfast to-day, in order that the whole party might have a consultation before going to the railroad meeting at Melrose. I should suspect that when the Author of Waverley sets his shoulders to any wheel, it must be in a devilish deep slough if it be not lifted out.

"As my brother James was obliged to return to Edinburgh, and I thought that I had stayed long enough, we set out from Abbotsford after luncheon, very reluctantly, for the party had grown upon our esteem very much, and had lately been augmented by the arrival from England of Mr. Lockhart, whom I wished to get acquainted with, and of Captain Scott, the poet's eldest son. The family urged me very much to stay, and I could only get away by making a promise to return for their little dance on Friday evening; so that it is not impossible this journal may have some additions made to it in the same strain."

"Abbotsford, 7th January, 1825.

"To-day my sister Fanny and I came here. In the evening there was a dance in honour of Sir Walter Scott's eldest son, who had recently come from Sandhurst College, after

having passed through some military examinations with great credit.

"We had a great clan of Scotts. There were no less than nine Scotts of Harden, and ten of other families. There were others besides from the neighbourhood — at least half-a-dozen Fergussons, with the jolly Sir Adam at their head — Lady Fergusson, her niece Miss Jobson, the pretty heiress of Lochore — &c. &c. &c. . . . . .

"The evening passed very merrily, with much spirited dancing; and the supper was extremely cheerful, and quite superior to that of Hogmanay.

"Abbotsford, 8th January.

"It is wonderful how many people a house can be made to hold upon occasions such as this; and when, in the course of the morning, the neighbours came to stream off to their respective homes, one stared, like the man in the Arabian Nights who uncorked the genie, thinking how the deuce they ever got in. There were a few who stayed a while to saunter about the dressed grounds, under the guidance of Sir Walter; but by one or two o'clock my sister and I found ourselves the only guests left, and on the Great Unknown proposing a walk to a point in his plantations called Turn-again, we gladly accepted his offer and set out.

"I have never seen him in better spirits, and we accompanied him for several hours with great delight. I observed on this occasion the tone of his innumerable anecdotes was somewhat different from what it had been when James and I and some other gentlemen formed his companions. There was then an occasional roughness in the point and matter of the stories; but no trace of this to-day. He was no less humorous, however, and varied than before; — always appropriate, too — in harmony with the occasion, as it were — never lugging in stories by the head and shoulders. It is very difficult, I may say impossible, to give a correct conception of this by mere description. So much consists in the

manner and the actual tone and wording of what is said; so much, also, which cannot be imparted, in the surrounding circumstances — the state of the weather — the look of the country — the sound of the wind in the trees close at hand — the view of the distant hills: — all these and a thousand other things produce an effect on the minds of those present which suits them for the reception of the conversation at the moment, and prevents any transfer of the sentiments produced thereby, to any one differently circumstanced.

"On reaching the brow of the hill on the eastern side of one of his plantations, we came in sight of Melrose Abbey, on which there was a partial gleam of sunshine lighting up an angle of the ruins. Straightway we had an anecdote of Tom Purdie, his gamekeeper and *factotum*. Tom has been many years with Sir Walter, and being constantly in such company, has insensibly picked up some of the taste and feeling of a higher order. 'When I came here first,' said Tom to the factor's wife, 'I was little better than a beast, and knew nae mair than a cow what was pretty and what was ugly. I was cuif enough to think that the bonniest thing in a country-side was a corn-field enclosed in four stane dykes; but now I ken the difference. Look this way, Mrs. Laidlaw, and I'll show you what the gentlefolks likes. See ye there now the sun glinting on Melrose Abbey? It's no aw bright, nor it's no aw shadows neither, but just a bit screed o' light — and a bit daud o' dark yonder like, and that's what they ca' picturesque; and, indeed, it maun be confessed it is unco bonnie to look at!'

"Sir Walter wished to have a road made through a straight belt of trees which had been planted before he purchased the property, but being obliged to return to Edinburgh, he entrusted it to Tom Purdie, his 'right-hand man.' 'Tom,' said he, 'you must not make this walk straight — neither must it be crooked.' 'Deil, Sir! than what maun it be like?' 'Why,' said his master, 'don't you remember when you were a shepherd, Tom, the way in which you dandered hame of an even? You never walked straight to your house, nor did you go

much about; now make me just such a walk as you used to take yourself.' Accordingly, '*Tom's walk*' is a standing proof of the skill and taste of the *ci-devant* shepherd, as well as of the happy power which his master possesses, in trifles as well as in great affairs, of imparting his ideas to those he wishes to influence. . . . . .

"In the course of our walk he entertained us much by an account of the origin of the beautiful song of 'Auld Robin Gray.' 'It was written,' he said, 'by Lady Anne Lindsay, now Lady Anne Barnard.* She happened to be at a house

* Lady Anne Barnard died in 1825, and in the same year Sir Walter Scott edited, for the Bannatyne Club, a tract containing a corrected version of the original ballad, and two continuations by the authoress. Part of the preface, which consists almost entirely of a letter from her to the editor, is as follows:—"*Robin Gray*, so called from its being the name of *the old herd* at Balcarras, was born soon after the close of the year 1771. My sister Margaret had married and accompanied her husband to London; I was melancholy, and endeavoured to amuse myself by attempting a few poetical trifles. There was an ancient Scotch melody, of which I was passionately fond; —— ——, who lived before your day, used to sing it to us at Balcarras. She did not object to its having improper words, though I did. I longed to sing old Sophy's air to different words, and give to its plaintive tones some little history of virtuous distress in humble life, such as might suit it. While attempting to effect this in my closet, I called to my little sister, now Lady Hardwicke, who was the only person near me, 'I have been writing a ballad, my dear; I am oppressing my heroine with many misfortunes. I have already sent her Jamie to sea, and broken her father's arm, and made her mother fall sick, and given her Auld Robin Gray for her lover; but I wish to load her with a fifth sorrow within the four lines, poor thing! Help me to one.'—'Steal the cow, sister Anne,' said the little Elizabeth. The cow was immediately *lifted* by me, and the song completed. At our fireside, and amongst our neighbours, 'Auld Robin Gray' was always called for. I was pleased in secret with the approbation it met with; but such was my *dread* of being suspected of writing *anything*, perceiving the shyness it created in those who could write *nothing*, that I carefully kept my own secret. * * * * * * * Meantime, little as this matter seems to have been worthy of a dispute, it afterwards became a party question be-

where she met Miss Suff Johnstone, a well known person, who played the air, and accompanied it by words of no great delicacy, whatever their antiquity might be; and Lady Anne, lamenting that no better words should belong to such a melody, immediately set to work and composed this very pathetic story. Truth, I am sorry to say, obliges me to add that it was a fiction. Robin Gray was her father's gardener, and the idea of the young lover going to sea, which would have been quite out of character here amongst the shepherds, was natural enough where she was then residing, on the coast of Fife. It was long unknown,' he added, 'who the author was; and indeed there was a clergyman on the coast whose conscience was so large that he took the burden of this matter upon himself, and pleaded guilty to the authorship. About two years ago I wrote to Lady Anne to know the truth — and she wrote back to say she was certainly the author, but wondered how I

tween the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. 'Robin Gray' was either a very very ancient ballad, composed perhaps by David Rizzio, and a great curiosity — or a very modern matter, and no curiosity at all. I was persecuted to avow whether I had written it or not, — where I had got it. Old Sophy kept my counsel, and I kept my own, in spite of the gratification of seeing a reward of twenty guineas offered in the newspapers to the person who should ascertain the point past a doubt, and the still more flattering circumstance of a visit from Mr. Jerningham, secretary to the Antiquarian Society, who endeavoured to entrap the truth from me in a manner I took amiss. Had he asked me the question obligingly, I should have told him the fact distinctly and confidentially. The annoyance, however, of this important ambassador from the antiquaries, was amply repaid to me by the noble exhibition of the 'Ballat of Auld Robin Gray's Courtship,' as performed by dancing-dogs under my window. It proved its popularity from the highest to the lowest, and gave me pleasure while I hugged myself in my obscurity."

The two versions of the second part of the ballad, written many years after the first part, are very inferior to it. In them, Auld Robin falls sick, — confesses that he himself stole the cow in order to force Jenny to marry him, — leaves to Jamie all his possessions, — dies, — and the young couple of course are united. — *Note by the Rev. Alexander Dyce*, 1839.

could have guessed it, as there was no person alive to whom she had told it. When I mentioned having heard it long ago from a common friend who was dead, she then recollected me, and wrote one of the kindest letters I ever received, saying she had till now not the smallest idea that I was the little *lame boy* she had known so many years before.'

"I give this anecdote partly from its own interest, and partly for the sake of introducing the unconcerned allusion to his own lameness — which I have heard him mention repeatedly, in the same sort of way, without seemingly caring about it. Once speaking of the old city wall of Edinburgh (which, by the way, he says was built during the panic caused by the disastrous battle of Flodden Field) — he said it used to be a great *ploy* in his youth to climb the said wall. 'I used often to do it,' he observed, 'notwithstanding my bad foot, which made it no very easy job.'

"On coming to a broad path in the middle of the woods, we took notice of a finger-post, on which was written 'The *Rod* to Selkirk.' We made some remark about Tom's orthography, upon which he laughed, and said that that finger-post had gained him great popularity in the neighbourhood. 'I cannot say,' he remarked, 'that I had any such view when I ordered it to be put up. The public road, it is true, is not far off, and this leads through the very centre of my grounds, but I never could bring myself to make that a reason for excluding any person who finds it agreeable or advantageous to take over the hill if he likes. But although my practice in this respect had always been well known, the actual admission of it, the avowed establishment of it as a sort of right, by sticking up the finger-post, was received as a kind of boon, and I got a world of credit for a thing which had certainly not any popularity for its object. Nevertheless,' he continued, 'I have no scruple in saying that what I did, deserved the good people's acknowledgment; and I seriously disapprove of those proprietors who act on a different principle in these matters. Nothing on earth would induce me to put up boards threatening prosecution, or cautioning one's fellow-creatures to beware of

man-traps and spring-guns. I hold that all such things are not only in the highest degree offensive and hurtful to the feelings of people whom it is every way important to conciliate, but that they are also quite inefficient — and I will venture to say, that not one of my young trees has ever been cut, nor a fence trodden down, or any kind of damage done, in consequence of the free access which all the world has to my place. Round the house, of course, there is a set of walks set apart and kept private for the ladies — but over all the rest of my land any one may rove as he likes. I please myself with the reflection that many people of taste may be indulging their fancies in these grounds, and I often recollect how much of Burns's inspiration was probably due to his having near him the woods of Ballochmyle to ramble through at his will when he was a ragged callant.' *

"He told us of the different periods at which he had planted his grounds. 'I bought this property bit by bit,' he said, 'as accident threw the means of purchase into my hands: I could not lay it all out in a consistent plan, for when I first came here I merely bought a few acres and built a cottage, as a kind of occasional retreat from the bustle of Edinburgh. By degrees I got another and another farm, till all you now see came to me. If things go on improving at the rate they do in the matter of travelling, I dare say I shall be able to live here all the year round, and come out every day from the Court. At present I pass about seven months of the year at Abbotsford; but if the projected railway is established, and we have steam-coaches upon it running at twenty miles an hour,

* "Talking one day upon this subject, he told me that he had much more pleasure when the children from Darnick and Melrose would come up to him with a pocketful of nuts, pulled from his own trees, than to see them scampering off the instant they got a peep of him. He had the satisfaction to find, too, that instead of having his woods destroyed, like man-trap, spring-gun-men, and prosecutors in general, the trespassers seemed as careful as if they were their own. 'And as to the nuts,' he added, 'I can buy as many for half-a-crown as I could gather any year from the whole glen, however well watched and protected.'" — *Note by Mr. Andrew Shortrede*, 1839.

it will be merely good exercise to go in to breakfast and come back to dinner.'

"In a hilly country such as this, one is more dependent upon the taste of one's neighbours than where the surface is flat, for the inequalities bring into view many distant points which one must constantly be wishing to see turned to advantage. Thus it is of consequence to be on such friendly terms with the neighbourhood, especially the proprietors on the opposite side of the river, that they may take one's comfort and pleasure into consideration when they come to plant, or otherwise to embellish their ground. Sir Walter pointed out several different plantations which had been made expressly with a view to the improvement of the prospect from Abbotsford. The owner of one of these estates came over to him one day to point out the line which he had traced with a plough, as the limit of a new plantation, and asked Sir Walter how he liked it, or if he wished any alteration to be made. The Author of Waverley thanked him for his attention, and the two gentlemen climbed the hill above Abbotsford to take the matter into consideration. It was soon seen that, without extending the projected plantation, or diminishing its beauty with reference to the estate on which it was made, a new line might be drawn which would double its apparent magnitude, and greatly enhance the beauty of its form as seen from Abbotsford. The gentleman was delighted to have an opportunity of obliging the Great well-known Unknown, and cantered back to change the line. The young trees are already giving sufficient evidence of the good taste of the proposer of the change, and, it may be said also, of his good sense and his good-nature, for unless he possessed both in an eminent degree, all his gigantic talents would be insufficient to bring round about him the ready hearts and hands of all within his reach. Scott of Gala, for instance, has, out of pure kindness, planted, for several miles, the whole of the opposite bank of the Tweed, and with great pains improved all the lines of his father's planting, solely to please his neighbour, and without any benefit to his own place. His worthy friend, also, of Eildon

Hall, he told us to-day, had kindly undertaken, in the same spirit, to plant the base of these two beautiful hills, which, without diminishing their grandeur, will greatly add to their picturesque effect, and, in fact, increase the bold magnificence of their summits.

"'I make not a rule to be on intimate terms,' he told us, 'with all my neighbours — that would be an idle thing to do. Some are good — some not so good, and it would be foolish and ineffectual to treat all with the same cordiality; but to live in harmony with all is quite easy, and surely very pleasant. Some of them may be rough and *gruff* at first, but all men, if kindly used, come about at last, and by going on gently, and never being eager or noisy about what I want, and letting things glide on leisurely, I always find in the end that the object is gained on which I have set my heart, either by exchange or purchase, or by some sort of compromise by which both parties are obliged, and good-will begot if it did not exist before — strengthened if it did exist.' ——

"'There, see,' he continued, 'that farm there, at the foot of the hill, is occupied by a respectable enough tenant of mine; I told him I had a great desire for him to try the effect of lime on his land. He said he doubted its success, and could not venture to risk so much money as it would cost. "Well," said I, "fair enough; but as I wish to have the experiment tried, you shall have the lime for the mere carting; you may send to the place where it is to be bought, and at the term-day you shall strike off the whole value of the lime from the rent due to me." When the day came, my friend the farmer came with his whole rent, which he laid down on the table before me without deduction. "How's this, my man? you are to deduct for the lime, you know." "Why, Sir Walter," replied he, "my conscience will not let me impose on you so far — the lime you recommended me to try, and which but for your suggestion I never would have tried, has produced more than would have purchased the lime half-a-dozen times over, and I cannot think of making a deduction."'

"In this way, by a constant quiet interchange of good offi-

ces, he extends his great influence amongst all classes, high and low; and while in the morning, at breakfast-time, he gets a letter from the Duke of Wellington, along with some rare Spanish manuscripts taken at Vittoria * — at mid-day he is gossiping with a farmer's wife, or pruning his young trees cheek by jowl with Tam Purdie — at dinner he is keeping the table merry, over his admirable good cheer, with ten hundred good stories, or discussing railroads, blackfaced sheep, and other improvements, with Torwoodlee — in the evening he is setting the young folks to dance, or reading some fine old ballad from Percy's Reliques, or some black-letter tome of Border lore, or giving snatches of beautiful songs, or relating anecdotes of chivalry — and ever and anon coming down to modern home life with some good honest practical remark which sinks irresistibly into the minds of his audience, — and all with such ease and unaffected simplicity as never, perhaps, was seen before in any man so gifted — so qualified to take the loftiest, proudest line at the head of the literature, the taste, the imagination, of the whole world! Who can doubt that, after such a day as I have glanced at, his slumbers must be peaceful, and that remorse is a stranger to his bosom, and that all his renown, all his wealth, and the love of 'such troops of friends,' are trebly gratifying to him, and substantial, from their being purchased at no cost but that of truth and nature.

"Alas for poor Lord Byron, of whom he told us an anecdote to-day, by which it appeared that his immense fame as an author was altogether insufficient to harden him against the darts of calumny or malevolence levelled at his private life. He quoted to Scott, with the bitterest despair, the strong expression of Shakspeare,

> 'The gods are just, and of our pleasant vices
> Make instruments to scourge us;' †

* About this time the Duke sent Scott some curious documents about the proposed duel between Charles V. and Francis I.

† *King Lear*, Act V. Scene 3.

and added, 'I would to God that I could have your peace of mind, Mr. Scott; I would give all I have, all my fame, everything, to be able to speak on this subject' (that of domestic happiness) 'as you do!'

"Sir Walter describes Lord Byron as being a man of real goodness of heart, and the kindest and best feelings, miserably thrown away by his foolish contempt of public opinion. Instead of being warned or checked by public opposition, it roused him to go on in a worse strain, as if he said — 'Ay, you don't like it — well, you shall have something worse for your pains.' Thus his Lordship, poor fellow, by taking the wrong view, went on from bad to worse, and at every struggle with the public sunk deeper and deeper in their esteem, while he himself became more and more sensitive about their disapprobation. 'Many, many a pleasant hour I have spent with him,' Sir Walter added, 'and I never met a man with nobler feelings, or one who, had he not unfortunately taken the wrong course, might have done more to make himself beloved and respected. A man of eminence in any line, and perhaps a man of great literary eminence especially, is exposed to a thousand eyes which men, not so celebrated, are safe from — and in consequence, right conduct is much more essential to his happiness than to those who are less watched; and I may add, that only by such conduct can the permanence of his real influence over any class be secured. I could not persuade Byron to see it in this light — the more's the pity, for he has had no justice done him.'

"Some one talked of the pains taken to provide the poor with receipts for making good dishes out of their ordinary messes. 'I dislike all such interference,' he said — 'all your domiciliary, kind, impertinent visits; — they are all pretty much felt like insults, and do no manner of good: let people go on in their own way, in God's name. How would you like to have a nobleman coming to you to teach you how to dish up your beefsteak into a French kickshaw? And who is there so miserably put to his ways and means that will endure to have another coming to teach him how to economize and

keep his accounts? Let the poor alone in their domestic habits, I pray you; protect them and treat them kindly, of course, and trust them; but let them enjoy in quiet their dish of porridge, and their potatoes and herrings, or whatever it may be — but for any sake don't torment them with your fashionable soups. And take care,' he added, 'not to give them anything gratis; except when they are under the gripe of immediate *misery* — what *they* think misery — consider it as a sin to do anything that can tend to make them lose the precious feeling of independence. For my part, I very, very rarely give anything away. Now, for instance, this pile of branches which has been thinned out this morning, is placed here for sale for the poor people's fires, and I am perfectly certain they are more grateful to me for selling it at the price I do (which, you may be sure, is no great matter), than if I were to give them ten times the quantity for nothing. Every shilling collected in this and other similar manners, goes to a fund which pays the doctor for his attendance on them when they are sick; and this is my notion of charity.'

"I shall have given a false impression of this great man's character to those who do not know him, if I have left an impression that he is all goodness and forbearance — that there is no acid in his character; for I have heard him several times as sharp as need be when there was occasion. To-day, for instance, when a recent trial, in which a beautiful actress was concerned, happened to be brought into discussion, he gave his opinion of all the parties with great force and spirit; and when the lady's father's name was mentioned as having connived at his daughter's disgrace, he exclaimed — 'Well, I do not know what I would not give to have one good kick at that infernal rascal; I would give it to him,' said he, drawing his chair back a foot from the table, 'I would give it to him in such a style as should send the vagabond out of that window as far as the Tweed. Only, God forgive me,' added he, smiling at his own unwonted impetuosity, and drawing his chair forward quietly to the table, 'only it would be too good a death for the villain; and besides,' said he, his good-humoured man-

ner returning as he spoke, 'it would be a sad pollution to our bonny Tweed to have the drowning of such a thoroughbred miscreant as could sell his daughter's honour!'

"It is interesting to see how all ranks agree to respect our hero, and to treat him with respect at once, and with kindness and familiarity. On high days and holidays, a large blue ensign, such as is worn by ships of war, is displayed at a flagstaff, rising from a round tower built for the purpose at one angle of his garden. The history of this flag is as follows:—

"The 'Old Shipping Smack Company' of Leith some time ago launched one of the finest vessels they had ever sailed, and called her 'The Walter Scott,' in honour of their countryman. In return for this compliment he made the Captain a present of a set of flags; which flags you may be sure the noble commander was not shy of displaying to all the world. Now it so happens that there is a strict order forbidding all vessels, except King's ships, to hoist any other flag than a red ensign, so that when our gallant smack-skipper chanced to fall in with one of his Majesty's cruizers, he was ordered peremptorily to pull down his blue colours. This was so sore a humiliation, that he refused to obey, and conceiving that he could out-sail the frigate, crowded all sail, and tried to make off with his ensign still flying at his mast-head. The ship-of-war, however, was not to be so satisfied, and hinted as much by dropping a cannon-shot across his fore-foot. Down came the blue ensign, which was accordingly made prize of, and transmitted forthwith to the Lords of the Admiralty, as is usual in such cases of contumely. Their Lordships, in merry mood, and perhaps even in the plenitude of their power feeling the respect which was due to genius, sent the flag to Abbotsford, and wrote an official letter to Sir Walter, stating the case, and requesting him to have the goodness to give orders to his cruizers in future not to hoist colours appropriated exclusively to the ships of his Majesty. The transaction was creditable to all parties, and he, instead of taking offence,*

*I do not understand how any man could have taken offence under

as a blockhead in his place would have done, immediately sent for his masons, and built him a tower on which to erect his flag — and the first occasion on which it was displayed was the late return of his eldest son from England. . . . . .

"I have caught the fever of story-telling from contact with this Prince of all Story-tellers! During the riots for the immaculate Queen lately deceased, a report went abroad, it seems, that Abbotsford had been attacked by a mob, its windows broken, and the interior ransacked. 'Ay, ay,' said one of the neighbouring country people to whom the story was told, 'so there was a great slaughter of people?' — 'Na, na,' said his informant, 'there was naebody killed.' — 'Weel, then,' said the other, 'depend upon it, it's aw a lee — if Abbotsford is taken by storm, and the Shirra in it, ye'll hae afterwards to tak account o' the killed and wounded, I'se warrant ye!'"

"Abbotsford, January 9.

"We saw nothing of the chief till luncheon-time, between one and two, and then only for a few minutes. He had gone out to breakfast, and on his return seemed busy with writing. At dinner he was in great force, and pleasant it was to observe the difference which his powers of conversation undergo by the change from a large to a small party. On Friday, when we sat down twenty to dinner, it cost him an effort apparently to keep the ball up at table; but next day, when the company was reduced to his own family, with only two strangers (Fanny and I), he appeared delighted to be at home, and expanded with surprising animation, and poured forth his stores of knowledge and fun on all hands. I have never seen any person on more delightful terms with his family than he is. The best proof of this is the ease and confidence with which they all treat him, amounting quite to familiarity. Even the youngest of his nephews and nieces can joke with him,

these circumstances. The First Lord of the Admiralty, Lord Melville, and the Secretary, Mr. Croker, were both intimate friends of Sir Walter's — and all that passed was of course matter of pleasantry.

and seem at all times perfectly at ease in his presence — his coming into the room only increases the laugh, and never checks it — he either joins in what is going on, or passes. No one notices him any more than if he were one of themselves. These are things which cannot be got up — no skill can put people at their ease, where the disposition does not sincerely coöperate.

"Very probably he has so correct a knowledge of human character in all its varieties, that he may assist by art in giving effect to this naturally kind bent of his disposition, and this he may do without ceasing to be perfectly natural. For instance, he never sits at any particular place at table — but takes his chance, and never goes, as a matter of course, to the top or to the bottom.* Perhaps this and other similar things are accidental, and done without reflection; but at all events, whether designed or not, their effect is to put every one as much at his ease as if a being of a superior order were not present.

"I know no one who takes more delight in the stories of others than he does, or who seems less desirous of occupying the ears of the company. It is true that no one topic can be touched upon, but straightway there flows out a current of appropriate story — and let the anecdote which any one else tells be ever so humorous, its only effect is to elicit from him another, or rather a dozen others, still more in point. Yet, as I am trying to describe this singular man to others who have not seen him, I should be leaving a wrong impression of his style in this respect, were I to omit mentioning that there is nothing in the least like triumph on these occasions, or any apparent wish to excel the last speaker — the new key is struck, as it were, and instantly the instrument discourses most eloquent music — but the thing is done as if he could not help it; and how often is his story suggested by the obvious desire to get the man that has been speaking out of a

*This seems refining. Sir Walter, like any other gentleman of his standing, might be expected to devolve the labour of carving on one of his sons.

scrape, either with some of the hearers, or perhaps with his own conscience. 'Are you a sportsman?' he asked me to-day. I said I was not — that I had begun too late in life, and that I did not find shooting in particular at all amusing. 'Well, neither do I,' he observed; 'time has been when I did shoot a good deal, but somehow I never very much liked it. I was never quite at ease when I had knocked down my black-cock, and going to pick him up, he cast back his dying eye with a look of reproach. I don't affect to be more squeamish than my neighbours, — but I am not ashamed to say, that no practice ever reconciled me fully to the cruelty of the affair. At all events, now that I can do as I like without fear of ridicule, I take more pleasure in seeing the birds fly past me unharmed. I don't carry this nicety, however, beyond my own person — as Walter there will take good occasion to testify to-morrow.'

"Apparently fearing that he had become a little too sentimental, he speedily diverted our thoughts by telling us of a friend of his, Mr. Hastings Sands, who went out to shoot for the first time, and after firing away for a whole morning without any success, at length brought down a bird close to the house, and ran up to catch his pheasant, as he supposed — but which, to his horror, he found was a pet parrot, belonging to one of the young ladies. It was flapping its painted plumage, now all dripping with blood — and ejaculating quickly, Pretty Poll! pretty Poll! as it expired at the feet of the luckless sportsman — who, between shame and regret, swore that, as it was his first experiment in shooting, it should be his last; and on the spot broke his gun all to pieces, and could never afterwards bear to hear a shot fired.

"But I am forgetting what I hinted at as a very characteristic turn of his good-nature. I had mentioned among other reasons why I was not very fond of shooting, that when I missed I was mortified at my want of skill, and that when I saw the bird lying dead at my feet it recalled to my mind a boyish piece of cruelty which I had been guilty of some five-and-twenty or thirty years ago, the recollection of which has

been a source of frequent and bitter remorse. It is almost too bad to relate — suffice it that the nest was robbed, the young ones drowned before the mother's eyes, and then she was killed. 'You take it too deeply now,' he said; 'and yet an early circumstance of that kind, properly reflected upon, is calculated to have the best effect on our character throughout life. I too,' he continued, 'have my story of boyish cruelty, which has often given me the bitterest remorse in my after life; but which I think has carried with it its useful lesson in practice. I saw a dog coming towards me, when I was a boy about the age you describe yourself to have been when you murdered the ox-eye family. What devil tempted me I know not, but I took up a large stone, threw it, and hit the dog. Nevertheless, it had still strength to crawl up to me, and lick my feet kindly, though its leg was broken — it was a poor bitch big with pup.'

"From parrots we got to *corbies*, or ravens, and he told us with infinite humour a story of a certain tame bird of this description, whose constant delight was to do mischief, and to plague all mankind and beastkind. 'A stranger,' he said, 'called one day with a very surly dog, whose habit it was to snarl and bite at every animal save man; and he was consequently the terror and hatred of his own fraternity, and of the whole race of cats, sheep, poultry, and so on. "Maître Corbeau" seemed to discover the character of the stranger, and from the moment of his arrival determined to play him a trick. I watched him all the while, as I saw clearly that he had a *month's mind* for some mischief. He first hopped up familiarly to Cato, as if to say, "How d'ye do?" Cato snapped and growled like a bear. Corbie retired with a flutter, saying, "God bless me, what's the matter? I had no idea, my good sir, that I was offending you — I scarcely saw you, I was looking for a worm." By and by he made another studied sort of approach — and when Cato growled he drew off, with an air as if he said, "What the devil is the matter with *you*? I'm not meddling with you — let *me* alone." Presently the dog became less and less suspicious of Mr. Corbie, and com-

posed himself on the sunny gravel-walk in a fine sleep. Corbie watched his moment, and hopped and hopped quietly till close up, and then leaping on Cato's back, flapped his wings violently, gave one or two severe dabs with his bill, and then flew up to the edge of the cornice over the gateway, and laughed and screamed with joy at the impotent fury of the dog: a human being could not have laughed more naturally — and no man that ever existed could have enjoyed a mischievous joke more completely than our friend Corbie.' . . . . .

"10th January 1825.

"The party at Abbotsford breaks up this morning, — to the sorrow, I believe, of every member of it. The loadstar of our attraction, accompanied by his sister-in-law, Mrs. Thomas Scott, and her family, set off for Lord Dalhousie's — and all the others, except Lady Scott and her daughter, who are to follow in a day or two, are streaming off in different directions. Sir Walter seems as unwilling to leave the country, and return to the bustle of the city, as any schoolboy could have been to go back to his lessons after the holidays. No man perhaps enjoys the country more than he does, and he is said to return to it always with the liveliest relish. It may be asked, if this be so, why he does not give up the town altogether? He might do so, and keep his Sheriffship; but his Clerkship is a thing of more consequence, and that he must lose; and what is far more important still, his constant transactions with the booksellers could never be carried on with convenience, were he permanently settled at a distance from them and their marts. His great purchases of land, his extensive plantations, the crowd of company which he entertains, and the splendid house he has just completed, are all severe pulls on his income — an income, it must be recollected, which is produced not from any fund, but by dint of labour, and from time to time. He is too prudent and sagacious a man not to live within his means; but as yet he cannot have laid by much, and he will have to write a good deal more before he can safely live where he pleases, and as he pleases.

"It becomes a curious question to know when it is that he actually writes these wonderful works which have fixed the attention of the world. Those who live with him, and see him always the idlest man of the company, are at a loss to discover when it is that he finds the means to compose his books. My attention was of course directed this way, and I confess I see no great difficulty about the matter. Even in the country here, where he comes professedly to be idle, I took notice that we never saw him till near ten o'clock in the morning, and, besides this, there were always some odd hours in the day in which he was not to be seen.

"We are apt to wonder at the prodigious quantity which he writes, and to imagine the labour must be commensurate. But, in point of fact, the quantity of mere writing is not very great. It certainly is immense if the quality be taken into view; but if the mere amount of handwriting be considered, it is by no means large. Any clerk in an office would transcribe one of the Waverley Novels, from beginning to end, in a week or ten days — say a fortnight. It is well known, or at least generally, and I have reason to believe truly admitted, that Sir Walter composes his works just as fast as he can write — that the manual labour is all that it costs him, for his thoughts flow spontaneously. He never corrects the press, or if he does so at all, it is very slightly — and in general his works come before the public just as they are written. Now, such being the case, I really have no difficulty in supposing that a couple of hours every day before breakfast may be quite sufficient for all the MS. of Waverley Novels produced in the busiest year since the commencement of the series.

"Since writing the above I have taken the trouble to make a computation, which I think fair to give, whichever way it may be thought to make in the argument.

"In each page of Kenilworth there are, upon an average, 864 letters: in each page of this Journal 777 letters. Now I find that in ten days I have written 120 pages, which would make about 108 pages of Kenilworth; and as there are 320 pages in a volume, it would, at my rate of writing this Jour-

nal, cost about 29½ days for each volume, or say three months for the composition of the whole of that work. No mortal in Abbotsford-house ever learned that I kept a Journal. I was in company all day, and all the evening till a late hour — apparently the least occupied of the party; and, I will venture to say, not absent from the drawing-room one quarter of the time that the Unknown was. I was always down to breakfast before any one else, and often three quarters of an hour before the Author of Kenilworth — always among the very last to go to bed — in short, I would have set the acutest observer at defiance to have discovered when I wrote this Journal — and yet it is written, honestly and fairly, day by day. I don't say it has cost me much labour; but it is surely not too much to suppose that its composition has cost me, an unpractised writer, as much study as Kenilworth has cost the glorious Unknown. I have not had the motive of £5500 to spur me on for my set of volumes; but if I had had such a bribe, in addition to the feelings of good-will for those at home, for whose sole perusal I write this — and if I had had in view, over and above, the literary glory of contributing to the happiness of two-thirds of the globe, — do you think I would not have written ten times as much, and yet no one should have been able to discover when it was that I had put pen to paper?

"All this assumes Sir Walter Scott to be *the man*. If at a distance there still exist any doubt on the question, there seems to be no longer any in Edinburgh. The whole tenor of Sir Walter's behaviour on the occasion shows him to be the writer; and the single argument of a man of his candour and literary taste never speaking of, or praising works such as these, would alone be sufficient. It would be totally irreconcilable with every part of his character to suppose that he would for an instant take the credit of another's work — and this *silence* is equivalent to the claim.

"It may then be settled that he is certainly the author — but some may ask, why then does he affect any mystery about it? This is easily answered — it saves him completely from a world of flattery and trouble, which he sincerely detests.

He never reads the criticisms on his books: this I know from the most unquestionable authority. 'Praise,' he says, 'gives him no pleasure — and censure annoys him.' He is fully satisfied to accept the intense avidity with which his novels are read — the enormous and continued sale of his works, as a sufficient commendation of them; and I can perfectly understand how the complete exemption from all idle flattery addressed to himself personally is a great blessing. Be it remembered, that this favour would be bummed into his ears by every stupid wretch whom he met with, as well as by the polite and learned — he would be literally worried to death by praise, since not a blockhead would ever let him pass. As it is, he enjoys all the reputation he would have if his name were on the title-page — perhaps more; he enjoys all the profit — and he escapes all worry about the matter. There is, no doubt, some little bookselling trick in it too; but this is fair enough: his works are perhaps more talked of, and consequently more sold, than if the author were avowed; — but the real cause of the mystery undoubtedly is his love of quiet, which he can thus indulge without the loss of one grain of literary fame or advantage of any description.

"To conclude — Sir Walter Scott really seems as great as a man as he is as an author; for he is altogether untouched by the applause of the whole civilized world. He is still as simple in his manners, as modest, unassuming, kind, and considerate, in his behaviour to all persons, as he was when the world were unaware of his enormous powers. If any man can be said to have a right to be presumptuous in consequence of possessing acknowledged talents far above those of his company, he is this man. But what sagacity and intimate knowledge of human nature does it not display, when a man thus gifted, and thus entitled as it were to assume a higher level, undazzled by such unanimous praise, has steadiness of head enough not to be made giddy, and clearness enough of moral vision to discover, that so far from lessening the admiration which it is admitted he might claim if he pleased, he augments it infinitely by seeming to waive that right altogether! How wisely

he acts by mixing familiarly with all men, drawing them in crowds around him, placing them at their ease within a near view of his excellence, and taking his chance of being more correctly seen, more thoroughly known, and having his merits more heartily acknowledged, than if, with a hundred times even his abilities, he were to trumpet them forth to the world, and to frighten off spectators to a distance by the brazen sound!

"It is, no doubt, in a great measure, to this facility of access, and engaging manner, that his immense popularity is due; but I should hold it very unfair to suppose that he proceeds upon any such calculation. It is far more reasonable to conclude that Providence, in giving him such astonishing powers of pleasing others, should also have gifted him with a heart to understand and value the delight of being beloved as well as wondered at and admired; and we may suppose that he now enjoys a higher pleasure from seeing the happiness which he has given birth to, both abroad in the world, and at home by his own fireside, than any which his readers are conscious of. If a man does act well, it is an idle criticism to investigate the motive with any view of taking exception to that. Those motives which induce to good results, must, in the long run, be good also. A man may be wicked, and yet on a special occasion act virtuously, with a view to deceive and gain under false colours some advantage which his own flag denies him; but this will not do to go on with. Thus it signifies nothing to say that Sir Walter Scott, knowing the envious nature of the world, and the pleasure it has in decrying high merit, and picking holes in the reputation of great men, deports himself as he does, in order to avoid the cavils of his inferiors. Where we find the success so great as in this case, we are quite safe in saying that it is not by rule and compass that the object is gained, but by genuine sentiment and right-mindedness — by the influence of those feelings which prompt men to take pleasure in good and kindly offices — by that judgment which sees through the mists of prejudice and error, finds *some* merit in every man, and makes allowances for the

faults and weaknesses of all;—above all, by that admirable self-command which scarcely allows any unfavourable opinion to pass the lips, — the fruit of which is, that by concealing even from himself, as it were, every unkindly emotion, he ceases to feel it. His principle is, by every means to banish from his mind all angry feelings of every description, and thus to exempt himself both from the pain of disappointment in disputes where he should fail, and from the pain of causing ill-will in cases where he might succeed. In this way he keeps on good terms with all his neighbours, without exception, and when others are disputing about boundaries and all the family of contiguous wrangling, he manages to be the universal friend. Instead of quarrelling with his eminent brother authors, whether poets or novelists (as so many others have done, and now do, to their mutual discomfort and shame), he is in friendly and thoroughly unenvious correspondence with them all. So far from any spark of jealousy being allowed to spring up, his delight is to discover and to foster, and make the most of genius wherever it exists. But the great trial is every-day life, and among every-day people: his house is filled with company all the year round, with persons of all ranks — from the highest down to the lowest class that is received at all in society; he is affable alike to them all, makes no effort at display on any occasion, is always gay and friendly, and puts every one at his ease; I consider all else as a trifle compared with the entire simplicity of his manners, and the total apparent unconsciousness of the distinction which is his due. This, indeed, cannot possibly be assumed, but must be the result of the most entire modesty of heart, if I may use such an expression, the purest and most genuine kindness of disposition, which forbids his drawing any comparison to the disadvantage of others. He has been for many years the object of most acute and vigilant observation, and as far as my own opportunities have gone, I must agree with the general report — namely, that on no occasion has he ever betrayed the smallest symptom of vanity or affectation, or insinuated a thought bordering on presumption, or even on a consciousness of his own

superiority in any respect whatsoever. Some of his oldest and most intimate friends assert, that he has even of late years become more simple and kindly than ever; that this attention to those about him, and absence of all apparent concern about himself, go on, if possible, increasing with his fame and fortune. Surely if Sir Walter Scott be not a happy man, which he seems truly to be, he deserves to be so!"

Thus terminates Captain Hall's Abbotsford Journal; and with his flourish of trumpets I must drop the curtain on a scene and period of unclouded prosperity and splendour. The muffled drum is in prospect.*

* This Chapter concluded the Fifth Volume of the first Edition of these Memoirs. — [1839.]

CHAPTER LXII.

Marriage of Lieutenant Walter Scott — Letter to Lady Davy — Project of Constable's Miscellany — Terry and the Adelphi Theatre — Publication of the Tales of the Crusaders — Preparations for the Life of Buonaparte — Letters to Mr. Terry, Mrs. Walter Scott, &c. — Description of Abbotsford in 1825.

1825.

With all his acuteness, Captain Basil Hall does not seem to have caught any suspicion of the real purpose and meaning of the ball for which he was invited back to Abbotsford on the 7th of January 1825. That evening was one of the very proudest and happiest in Scott's brilliant existence. Its festivities were held in honour of a young lady, whom the Captain names cursorily among the guests as "the pretty heiress of Lochore." It was known to not a few of the party, and I should have supposed it might have been surmised by the rest, that those halls were displayed for the first time in all their splendour, on an occasion not less interesting to the Poet than the conclusion of a treaty of marriage between the heir of his name and fortunes, and the amiable niece of his friends Sir Adam and Lady Fergusson. It was the first regular ball given at Abbotsford, and the last. Nay, though twelve years have elapsed, I believe nobody has ever danced under that roof since then. I myself never

again saw the whole range of apartments thrown open for the reception of company except once — on the day of Sir Walter Scott's funeral.

The lady's fortune was a handsome one, and her guardians exerted the powers with which they were invested, by requiring that the marriage-contract should settle Abbotsford (with reservation of Sir Walter's own liferent) upon the affianced parties, in the same manner as Lochore. To this condition he gave a ready assent, and the moment he had signed the deed, he exclaimed — "I have now parted with my lands with more pleasure than I ever derived from the acquisition or possession of them; and if I be spared for ten years, I think I may promise to settle as much more again upon these young folks." It was well for himself and his children that his auguries, which failed so miserably as to the matter of worldly wealth, were destined to no disappointment as respected considerations of a higher description. I transcribe one of the letters by which he communicated the happy event to the wide circle of friends who were sure to sympathize in his feelings of paternal satisfaction.

"*To the Lady Davy, Grosvenor Street, London.*

"Edinburgh, 24th January 1825.

"My Dear Lady Davy, — As I know the kind interest which you take in your very sincere friend and Scotch cousin, I think you will like to hear that my eldest hope, who, not many years ago, was too bashful to accept your offered salute, and procured me the happiness of a kiss on his account, beside that which I always claim on my own, has, as he has grown older, learned a little better how such favours are to be estimated. In a word, Walter, then an awkward boy, has now turned out a smart young fellow, with good manners, and a fine figure, if a father may judge, stand-

ing well with the Horse-Guards, and much master of the scientific part of his profession, retaining at the same time much of the simple honesty of his original character, though now travelled, and acquainted with courts and camps. Some one of these good qualities, I know not which, or whether it were the united force of the whole, and particularly his proficiency in the attack of strong places, has acquired him the affection and hand of a very sweet and pretty Mrs. Anne Page, who is here as yet known by the name of Miss Jobson of Lochore, which she exchanges next week for that of Mrs. Scott of Abbotsford. It would seem some old flirtation betwixt Walter and her had hung on both their minds, for at the conclusion of a Christmas party we learned the pretty heiress had determined to sing the old tune of—

> 'Mount and go — mount and make you ready,
> Mount and go, and be a soldier's lady.'

Though her fortune be considerable, the favours of the public will enable me to make such settlements as her friends think very adequate. The only impediment has been the poor mother (a Highland lady of great worth and integrity), who could not brook parting with the sole object of her care and attention, to resign her to the vicissitudes of a military life, while I necessarily refused to let my son sink into a mere fox-hunting, muirfowl-shooting squire. She has at length been obliged to acquiesce rather than consent — her friends and counsellors being clear-sighted enough to see that her daughter's happiness could scarce be promoted by compelling the girl to break off a mutual attachment, and a match with a young lieutenant of hussars, sure of having a troop very soon, with a good estate in reversion, and as handsome a fellow as ever put his foot in a stirrup. So they succeeded in bringing matters to a bearing, although old Papa has practised the 'profane and unprofitable art of poem-making' — and the youngster wears a pair of formidable mustachios. They are to be quiet at Abbotsford for a few days, and then they go to town to make their necessary purchases of carriage, and so forth;

they are to be at my old friend Miss Dumergue's, and will scarcely see any one; but as I think you will like to call on my dear little Jane, I am sure she will see you, and I know you will be kind and indulgent to her. Here is a long letter when I only meant a line. I think they will be in London about the end of February, or beginning of March, and go from thence to Ireland, Walter's leave of absence being short. My kindest compliments to Sir Humphry, and pray acquaint him of this change in our family, which opens to me another vista in the dark distance of futurity, which, unless the lady had what Sir Hugh Evans calls *good gifts*, could scarce otherwise have happened during my lifetime — at least without either imprudence on Walter's part, or restrictions of habits of hospitality and comfort on my own. — Always, dear Lady Davy, your affectionate and respectful friend and cousin,

"WALTER SCOTT."

The marriage took place at Edinburgh on the 3d day of February, and when the young couple left Abbotsford two or three weeks afterwards, Sir Walter promised to visit them at their regimental quarters in Ireland in the course of the summer. Before he fulfilled that purpose he had the additional pleasure of seeing his son gazetted as Captain in the King's Hussars — a step for which Sir Walter advanced the large sum of £3500. Some other incidents will be gathered from his letters to his son and daughter-in-law, — of which, however, I give such copious extracts chiefly for the illustration they afford of his truly paternal tenderness for the young lady who had just been admitted into his family — and which she, from the first hour of their connexion to the last, repaid by a filial love and devotedness that formed one of the sweetest drops in his cup of life.

"*To Mrs. Walter Scott, Dublin.*

"Abbotsford, March 20, 1825.

"My Dearest Child,—I had the great pleasure of receiving your kind and attentive letter from London a few days later than I ought to have done, because it was lying here while I was absent on a little excursion, of which I have to give a most interesting account. Believe me, my love, I am VERY grateful for the time you bestow on me, and that you cannot give so great happiness to any one as to me by saying you are well and happy. My daughters, who deserve all the affection a father can bestow, are both near me, and in safe guardianship, the one under the charge of a most affectionate husband, and the other under the eye of her parents. For my sons, I have taught them, and what was more difficult, I have taught myself the philosophy, that for their own sake and their necessary advancement in life, their absences from my house must be long, and their visits short; and as they are both, I hope, able to conduct themselves wisely and honourably, I have learned to be contented to hope the best, without making myself or them uneasy by fruitless anxiety. But for YOU, my dear Jane, who have come among us with such generous and confiding affection, my stoicism must excuse me if I am more anxious than becomes either a philosopher or a hackneyed man of the world, who uses in common cases to take that world as it goes. I cannot help worrying myself with the question, whether the object of such constant and affectionate care may not feel less happy than I could wish her, in scenes which must be so new, and under privations which must be felt by you the more that your earlier life has been an entire stranger to them. I know Walter's care and affection will soften and avert these as much as possible, and if there be anything in the power of old papa to assist him in the matter, you will make him most happy by tasking that power to the utmost. I wrote to him yesterday that he might proceed in bargain for the troop, and send me the terms, that I might

provide the needful, as mercantile folks call it, in time and place suitable. The rank of Captain gives, I am aware, a degree of consideration which is worth paying for; and what is still more, my little Jane, as a Captain's lady, takes better accommodation every way than is given to a subaltern's. So we must get the troop by all means, *coute qui coute.*

"Now I will plague you with no more business; but give you an account of myself in the manner of Mr. Jonathan Oldbuck, if ever you heard of such a person. You must suppose that you are busy with your work, and that I am telling you some long story or other, and that you now and then look round and say *eh*, as you do when you are startled by a question or an assertion — it is not quite *eh* either, but just a little quiet interjection, which shows you are attending. You see what a close observer papa is of his child.

"Well then, when, as I calculate (as a Yankee would say), you were tossing on the waves of the Irish Channel, I was also tossing on the Vadum Scotticum of Ptolemy, on my return from the celebrated *Urbs Orrea* of Tacitus. 'Eh!' says Jane; 'Lord, Walter, what can the old gentleman mean?' — '*Weiss nichts davon,*' says the hussar, taking his cigar from under his moustaches (no, I beg pardon, he does not take out the cigar, because, from the last advices, he has used none in his London journey.) He says *weiss nichts*, however, which is, in Italian, *No so* — in French, *Je ne'n scais rien* — in broad Scotch, *I neither ken nor care.* — Well, you ask Mr. Edgeworth, or the chaplain of the regiment, or the first scholar you come by — that is to say, you don't attempt to pronounce the hieroglyphical word, but you fold down the letter just at the place, show the talismanic *Urbs Orrea* and no more, and ask him in which corner of the earth Sir Walter can have been wandering? So, after a moment's recollection, he tells you that the great Roman general, Agricola, was strangely put to his trumps at the *Urbs Orrea* during his campaign in Caledonia, and that the ninth legion was surprised there by the British, and nearly destroyed; then he gets a county history, and a Tacitus, and Sir Robert Sibbald's tracts, and begins to fish

about, and finds at length that the *Urbs Orrea* is situated in the kingdom of Fife * — that it is now called Lochore — that it belonged to the Lochores — the De Vallences — the Wardlaws — the Malcolms — and Lord knows whom in succession — and then, in a sheet wet from the press, he finds it is now the property of a pretty and accomplished young lady, who, in an unthrift generosity, has given it — with a much more valuable present, namely, *her own self* — to a lieutenant of hussars. So there the scholar shuts his book, and observes, that as there are many cairns and tumuli and other memorials upon the scene of action, he wonders whether Sir Walter had not the curiosity to open some of them. 'Now heaven forbid!' says Jane; 'I think the old knight has stock enough for boring one with his old Border ballads and battles, without raising the bones of men who have slept 1000 years quietly on my own estate to assist him.' Then I can keep silence no longer, but speak in my own proper person. 'Pray, do you not bore me, Mrs. Jane, and have not I a right to retaliate?' — '*Eh!*' says the lady of Lochore, 'how is it possible that I should bore you, and so many hundred miles between us?' — 'That's the very reason,' says the Laird of Abbotsford, 'for if you were near me, the thing would be impossible — but being, as you say, at so many hundred miles distant, I am always thinking about you, and asking myself an hundred questions which I cannot answer; for instance, I cannot go about my little improvements without teasing myself with thinking whether Jane would like the green-house larger or less — and whether Jane would like such line of walk, or such another — and whether that stile is not too high for Jane to step over.' — 'Dear papa,' says Jane, '*your own style* is really too high for my comprehension.'

"Well then, I am the most indulgent papa in the world, and so you see I have turned over a new leaf. The plain sense of all this rambling stuff, which escapes from my pen as

* According to the general creed — (out of the "Kingdom of Fife," that is to say) — Mr. Oldbuck was quite wrong as to the identification of this *prætorium*.

it would from my tongue, is that I have visited for a day, with Isaac Bayley,* your dominions of Lochore, and was excellently entertained, and as happy as I could be where everything was putting me in mind that she was absent whom I could most have wished present. It felt, somehow, like an intrusion, and as if it was not quite right that I should be in Jane's house, while Jane herself was amongst strangers: this is the sort of false colouring which imagination gives to events and circumstances. Well, but I was much pleased with all I saw, and particularly with the high order Mr. Bayley has put everything into; and I climbed Bennarty like a wild goat, and scrambled through the old crags like a wild-cat, and pranced through your pastures like a wild-buck (fat enough to be in season though), and squattered through your drains like a wild-duck, and had nearly lost myself in your morasses like the ninth legion, and visited the old castle, which is *not* a *stupit place*, and in short, wandered from Dan to Beersheba, and tired myself as effectually in your dominions as I did you in mine upon a certain walk to the Rhymer's Glen. I had the offer of your pony, but the weather being too cold, I preferred walking. A cheerful little old gentleman, Mr. Birrel, and Mr. Greig the clergyman, dined with us, and your health was not forgotten. — On my retreat (Border fashion) I brought away your pony and the little chaise, believing that both will be better under Peter Mathieson's charge than at Lochore, in case of its being let to strangers. Don't you think Jane's pony will be taken care of?

"The day we arrived, the weather was gloomy and rainy — the climate sorrowful for your absence, I suppose; the next, a fine sunny frost; the third, when I came off, so checkered with hail showers as to prevent a visit I had meditated to two very interesting persons in the neighbourhood. 'The Chief Commissioner and Charles Adam, I suppose?' — 'Not a bit; guess again.' — 'O, Mr. Beaton of Contal, or Mr. Sym of Blair?' — 'Not a bit; guess again.' — 'I won't guess any more.' —

* A cousin of the young lady, and the legal manager of her affairs.

Well, then, it was two honest gentlemen hewn in stone — some of the old knights of Lochore, who were described to me as lying under your gallery in the kirk; but as I had no reason to expect a warm reception from them, I put off my visit till some more genial season.

"This puts me in mind of Warwick unvisited, and of my stupidity in not letting you know that the church is as well worth seeing as the castle, and you might have seen that, notwithstanding the badness of the morning. All the tombs of the mighty Beauchamps and Nevilles are to be seen there, in the most magnificent style of Gothic display, and in high preservation. However, this will be for another day, and you must comfort yourself that life has something still to show.

"I trust you will soon find yourself at Edgeworthstown, where I know you will be received with open arms, for Miss Edgeworth's kindness is equal to her distinguished talents.

"I am glad you like my old acquaintance, Mathews. Some day I will make him show his talent for your amusement in private; for I know him well. It is very odd, he is often subject to fits of deep melancholy.

"This is a letter of formidable length, but our bargain is, long or short, just as the humour chances to be, and you are never to mend a pen or think upon a sentence, but write whatever comes readiest. My love to Walter. I am rather anxious to know if he has got his horses well over, and whether all his luggage has come safe. I am glad you have got a carriage to your mind; it is the best economy to get a good one at once. Above all, I shall be anxious to hear how you like the society of the ladies of the 15th. I know my Jane's quiet prudence and good sense will save her from the risk of making sudden intimacies, and induce her to consider for a little while which of her new companions may suit her best; in the meanwhile being civil to all.

"You see that I make no apology for writing silly letters; and why should you think that I can think yours stupid? There is not a *stupit* bit about them, nor any word, or so

much as a comma, that is not interesting to me. Lady Scott and Anne send their kindest love to you, and grateful compliments to Mrs. Edgeworth, Miss Edgeworth, our friend Miss Harriet, and all the family at Edgeworthstown. *Buona notte, amata bene.* Good-night, darling, and take good care of yourself. — I always remain your affectionate father,

" WALTER SCOTT.

" P. S. — They say a man's fortune depends on a wife's pleasure. I do not know how that may be; but I believe a lady's comfort depends much on her *fille-de-chambre*, and therefore beg to know how Rebecca discharges her office."

" *To Mrs. Walter Scott, Edgeworthstown, Ireland.*

" Abbotsford, March 23, 1825.

" My Dearest Jane, — I am afraid you will think me a merciless correspondent, assailing you with so close a fire of letters; but having a frank, I thought it as well to send you an epistle, though it can contain nothing more of interest excepting that we are all well. I can, however, add more particularly than formerly, that I learn from Mrs. Bayley that Mrs. Jobson's health is not only good, but her spirits are remarkably so, so as to give the greatest pleasure to all friends. I can see, I think, a very good reason for this; for, after the pain of the first separation from so dear an object, and after having brought her mind to believe that your present situation presented to you a fair chance for happiness, I can easily suppose that her maternal anxiety is greatly relieved from fears and apprehensions which formerly distressed her. Nothing can be more kind and more handsome than the way in which Mrs. Jobson speaks of Walter, which I mention, because it gives me sincere pleasure, and will, I am sure, afford the same to you, or rather much more.

" My troops here are sadly diminished. I have only Anne to parade for her morning walk, and to domineer over for

going in thin slippers and silk stockings through dirty paths, and in lace veils through bushes and thorn brakes. I think Jane sometimes came in for a share of the lecture on these occasions. So I walk my solitary round — generally speaking — look after my labourers, and hear them regularly inquire, 'If I have heard from the Captain and his Leddy?' I wish I could answer them — *yes;* but have no reason to be impatient. This is the 23d, and I suppose Walter will be at Cork this evening to join the 15th, and that you are safe at Edgeworthstown to spend your first short term of widowhood. I hope the necessary hospitality to his mess will not occasion his dissipating too much; for, to be a very strong young man, I know no one with whom what is called hard living agrees so ill. A happy change in the manners of the times fortunately renders such abuse of the good creature, wine, much less frequent and less fashionable than it was in my days and Sir Adam's. Drinking is not now the vice of the times, whatever vices and follies they may have adopted in its stead.

"I had proceeded thus far in my valuable communication, when, lo! I was alarmed by the entrance of that terrific animal a two-legged boar — one of the largest size and most tremendous powers. By the way, I learned, from no less an authority than George Canning, what my own experience has since made good, that an efficient bore must always have something respectable about him, otherwise no one would permit him to exercise his occupation. He must be, for example, a very rich man (which, perhaps, gives the greatest privilege of all) — or he must be a man of rank and condition too important to be treated *sans ceremonie* — or a man of learning (often a dreadful bore) — or of talents undoubted, or of high pretensions to wisdom and experience — or a great traveller; — in short, he must have some tangible privilege to sanction his profession. Without something of this kind, one would treat a bore as you do a vagrant mendicant, and send him off to the workhouse if he presumed to annoy you. But when properly qualified, the bore is more like a beggar with a badge and pass from his parish, which entitles him to disturb you

with his importunity, whether you will or no.* Now, my bore is a complete gentleman and an old friend, but, unhappily for those who know him, master of all Joe Miller's stories of sailors and Irishmen, and full of quotations from the classics as hackneyed as the post-horses of Melrose. There was no remedy; I must either stand his shot within doors, or turn out with him for a long walk, and, for the sake of elbow-room, I preferred the last. Imagine an old gentleman, who has been handsome, and has still that sort of pretension which leads him to wear tight pantaloons and a smart half-boot, neatly adapted to show off his leg; suppose him as upright and straight as a poker, if the poker's head had been, by some accident, bent to one side; add to this, that he is a dogged Whig; consider that I was writing to Jane, and desired not to be interrupted by much more entertaining society. — Well, I was *had*, however — fairly caught — and out we sallied, to make the best we could of each other. I felt a sort of necessity to ask him to dinner; but the invitation, like Macbeth's *amen*, stuck in my throat. For the first hour he got the lead, and kept it; but opportunities always occur to an able general, if he knows how to make use of them. In an evil hour for him, and a happy one for me, he started the topic of our intended railroad; *there* I was a match for him, having had, on Tuesday last, a meeting with Harden, the two Torwoodlees, and the engineer, on this subject, so that I had at my finger-end every *cut*, every lift, every degree of elevation or depression, every pass in the country, and every possible means of crossing them. So I kept the whip-hand of him completely, and never permitted him to get off the railway again to his own ground. In short, so thoroughly did I bore my bore, that he sickened and gave in, taking a short leave of me. Seeing him in full retreat, I *then* ventured to make the civil offer of a dinner. But the railroad had been breakfast, luncheon, dinner, and supper to boot — he hastily excused himself, and left me at double-quick time, sick of railroads, I

* N. B. — At the time when this letter was written, Miss Edgeworth had not published her admirable *Essay on Bores*.

dare say, for six months to come. But I must not forget that I am perhaps abusing the privilege I have to bore you, being that of your affectionate papa.

"How nicely we could manage without the said railroad, now the great hobby of our Teviotdale lairds, if we could by any process of conjuration waft to Abbotsford some of the coal and lime from Lochore — though if I were to wish for such impossibilities, would rather desire Prince Houssein's tapestry in the Arabian Nights to bring Walter and Jane to us now and then, than I would wish for 'Fife and all the lands about it.'*

"By the by, Jane, after all, though she looks so demure, is a very sly girl, and keeps her accomplishments to herself. You would not talk with me about planting and laying out ground; and yet, from what you had been doing at Lochore, I see what a pretty turn you have for these matters. I wish you were here to advise me about the little pond which we passed, where, if you remember, there is a new cottage built. I intend to plant it with aquatic trees, willows, alders, poplars, and so forth — and put trouts and perches into the water — and have a preserve of wild-ducks on the pond, with Canadian geese and some other water-fowl. I am to get some eggs from Lord Traquair, of a curious species of half-reclaimed wild-ducks, which abound near his solitary old chateau, and nowhere else in Scotland that I know of; and I can get the Canadian geese, curious painted animals, that look as if they had flown out of a figured Chinese paper, from Mr. Murray of Broughton. The foolish folks, when I was absent, chose to improve on my plan by making an island in the pond, which is exactly the size and shape of a Stilton cheese. It will be useful, however, for the fowl to breed in.

"Mamma drove out your pony and carriage to-day. She was (twenty years ago), the best *lady-whip* in Edinburgh, and was delighted to find that she retained her dexterity. I hope she will continue to exercise the rein and whip now and then, as her health is much improved by moderate exercise.

"Adieu, my dear Jane. Mamma and Anne join in the

* A song of Dr. Blacklock's.

kindest love and best wishes. I please myself with the idea that I shall have heard you are well and happy long before this reaches you. — Believe me always your affectionate father, WALTER SCOTT.

"I hope you will take my good example, and write without caring or thinking either what you have got to say, or in what words you say it."

"*To Walter Scott, Esq., &c. &c., Barracks, Cork.*

"Abbotsford, 4th April 1825.

"My Dear Children, — I received your joint composition without a date, but which circumstances enabled me to fix it as written upon the 24th or 25th March. I am very sorry on Jane's account for the unpleasant necessity of night journeys, and the inconvenience of bad quarters. I almost wish you had stuck by your original plan of leaving Jane at Edgeworthstown. As for you, Mr. Walter, I do not grudge your being obliged to pay a little deference to the wig and gown. *Cedant arma togæ* is a lesson well taught at an assize. But although you, thanks to the discipline of the most excellent of fathers, have been taught not to feel greatly the inconvenience of night journeys or bad lodgings, yet my poor Jane, who has not had these advantages, must, I fear, feel very uncomfortable; and I hope you will lay your plans so that she shall be exposed to them as little as possible. I like old songs, and I like to hear Jane sing them; but I would not like that she had cause to sing,

'Oh but I'm weary with wandering,
Oh but my fortunes are bad;
It sets not a gentle young lady
To follow a sodger lad.'

But against the recurrence of these inconveniences, I am sure Walter will provide as well as he can. — I hope you have delivered your introduction to Mrs. Scott (of Harden's) friend

in the neighbourhood of Cork. Good introductions should never be neglected, though numerous ones are rather a bore. A lady's society, especially when entering on life, should be, as they are said to choose their liquor, little but good; and Mrs. Scott being really a woman of fashion — a character not quite so frequent in reality as aspired to — and being, besides, such an old friend of yours, is likely to introduce you to valuable and creditable society.

"We had a visit from Lockhart yesterday. He rode out on Saturday with a friend, and they dined here, remained Sunday, and left us this morning early. I feel obliged to him for going immediately to Mrs. Jobson's when the explosion took place so near her, in my friend Colin Mackenzie's premises.* She had experienced no inconvenience but the immediate fright, for the shock was tremendous — and was rather proud of the substantial capacity of the house, which had not a pane broken, when many of the adjoining tenements scarce had one left.

"We have had our share of casualties. Sibyl came down with me, but without any injury; but Tom Purdie being sent on some business by Mr. Laidlaw, she fell with him, and rolled over him, and bruised him very much. This is rather too bad, so I shall be on the *pavé* for a pony, my neck being rather precious.

"Touching Colonel Thwackwell,† of whom I know nothing but the name, which would bespeak him a strict disciplinarian, I suppose you are now arrived at that time of life you can take your ground from your observation, without being influenced by the sort of cabal which often exists in our army, especially in the corps where the officers are men of fortunes or expectations, against a commanding officer. The execution of their duty is not *always* popular with young men, who may like the dress and show of a regimental officer; and it often

* This alludes to an explosion of gas in Shandwick Place, Edinburgh.

† Sir Walter had misread, or chose to miswrite, the name of his son's new commandant, Lieutenant-Colonel *Thackwell.*

happens that a little pettishness on the one side begets a little repulsiveness of manner on the other, so that it becomes the question how the one shall command, and the other obey, in the way most disagreeable to the other, without a tangible infringement of rules. This is the shame of our army, and in a greater degree that of our navy. A humble and reflecting man keeps as much aloof as possible from such feuds. You have seen the world more than when you joined the 18th.

"The Catholic question seems likely to be carried at last. I hope, though I doubt it a little, that Ireland will be the quieter, and the people more happy. I suspect, however, that it is laying a plaster to the foot while the head aches, and that the fault is in the landholder's extreme exactions, not in the disabilities of the Catholics, or any more remote cause.

"My dear Jane, pray take care of yourself, and write me soon how you are and what you are doing. I hope it will contain a more pleasant account of your travels than the last. Mamma and Anne send best loves. I hope my various letters have all come to your hand, and am, my dear children, always your affectionate father, WALTER SCOTT."

"*To Walter Scott, Esq., Lieutenant 15th Hussars, Dublin.*

"Abbotsford, 27th April 1825.

"My Dear Walter, — I received to-day your interesting communication, and have written to Edinburgh to remit the price of this troop as soon as possible. I can make this out without troubling Mr. Bayley; but it will pare my nails short for the summer, and I fear prevent my paying your carriage, as I had intended.

"Nicol is certainly going to sell Faldonside.* The Nabal asks £40,000 — at least £5000 too much. Yet in the present low rate of money, and general thirst for land, there is no saying but he may get a fool to offer him his price or near it. I should like to know your views about this matter, as it is more your concern than mine, since you will, I hope, have a

* See *ante*, Vol. V. p. 260.

much longer date of it. I think I could work it all off during my life, and also improve the estate highly; but then it is always a heavy burden, and I would not like to undertake it, unless I was sure that Jane and you desired such an augmentation of territory. I do not mean to do anything hasty, but, as an opportunity may cast up suddenly, I should like to know your mind.

"I conclude, this being 27th April, that you are all snugly settled in Dublin. I am a little afraid of the gaieties for Jane, and hope she will be gay moderately, that she may be gay long. The frequent habit of late hours is always detrimental to health, and sometimes has consequences which last for life. *Avis au lecteur;* of course I do not expect you to shut yourselves up at your period of life. Your course of gaiety at Cork reminds me of Jack Johnstone's song,

> 'Then we'll visit the Callaghans, Brallaghans,
> Nowlans, and Dowlans likewise,
> And bother them all with the beauty
> Which streams from my Judy's (or Jeanie's) black eyes.'

"We have better accounts of little Johnnie of late — his cough is over for the present, and the learned cannot settle whether it has been the hooping-cough or no. Sophia talks of taking him to Germiston. Lockhart comes here for the Circuit, and I expect him to-morrow.

"Sir Adam and Lady Fergusson bring most excellent accounts of Mrs. Jobson's good health and spirits. Sir Henry Jardine (he writes himself no less now) hath had the dignity of knighthood inflicted on him. Mamma and Anne join in kind love. I expect a long letter from Jane one of these days soon; she writes too well not to write with ease to herself, and therefore I am resolved her talent shall not be idle, if a little jogging can prevail on her to exercise it.

"You have never said a word of your horses, nor how you have come on with your domestics, those necessary plagues of our life. Two or three days since, that cub of Sir Adam's chose to amuse himself with flinging crackers about the hall

here when we were at dinner. I think I gave him a proper jobation.

"Here is the first wet day we have had — very welcome, as the earth required it much, and the season was backward. I can hear Bogie whistling for joy. — Your affectionate father,

"WALTER SCOTT."

In May 1825, Sir Walter's friend Terry, and his able brother comedian, Mr. Frederick Yates, entered on a negotiation, which terminated, in July, in their becoming joint lessees and managers of the Adelphi Theatre, London. Terry requested Scott and Ballantyne to assist him on this occasion by some advance of money, or if that should be inconvenient, by the use of their credit. They were both very anxious to serve him; but Sir Walter had a poor opinion of speculations in theatrical property, and, moreover, entertained suspicions, too well justified by the result, that Terry was not much qualified for conducting the pecuniary part of such a business. Ultimately Ballantyne, who shared these scruples, became Terry's security for a considerable sum (I think £500), and Sir Walter pledged his credit in like manner to the extent of £1250. He had, in the sequel, to pay off both this sum and that for which Ballantyne had engaged.

Several letters were interchanged before Terry received the support he had requested from his Scotch friends; and I must extract two of Sir Walter's. The first is, in my opinion, when considered with reference to the time at which it was written, and the then near though unforeseen result of the writer's own commercial speculations, as remarkable a document as was ever penned. It is, moreover, full of shrewd and curious suggestions touching theatrical affairs in general — from the highest to the

lowest. The second is, at least, a specimen of friendly caution and delicate advice most inimitably characteristic of Scott.

"*To Daniel Terry, Esq., London.*

"Edinburgh, May 5th, 1825.

"My Dear Terry,—I received your long confidential letter; and as the matter is in every respect important, I have given it my anxious consideration. 'The plot is a good plot, and the friends, though I know them only by your report, are, I doubt not, good friends, and full of expectation.'* There are, however, two particulars unfavourable to all theatrical speculations, and of which you are probably better aware than I am. The first is, that every scheme depending on public caprice must be irregular in its returns. I remember John Kemble, complaining to me of Harry Siddons's anxious and hypochondriac fears about his Edinburgh concern, said, 'He does not consider that no theatre whatever can be considered as a regular source of income, but must be viewed as a lottery, at one time strikingly successful, at another a total failure.' Now this affects your scheme in two ways. First, you can hardly expect, I fear, your returns to be so regular every season, even though your calculation be just as to the recent average. And, secondly, you must secure some fund, either of money or credit, to meet those blanks and bad seasons which must occasionally occur. The best business is ruined when it becomes pinched for money, and gets into the circle of discounting bills, and buying necessary articles at high prices and of inferior quality, for the sake of long credit. I own your plan would have appeared to me more solid, though less splendid, if Mr. Jones, or any other monied man, had retained one-half or one-third of the adventure; for every speculation requires a certain command of money, and cannot be conducted with any plausibility upon credit alone. It is easy to make it feasible on paper, but the times of payment

* Hotspur, 1*st King Henry IV.* Act II. Scene 3.

arrive to a certainty. Those of supply are less certain, and cannot be made to meet the demands with the same accuracy. A month's difference between demand and receipt makes loss of credit; loss of credit is in such a case ruin. I would advise you and Mr. Yates to consider this, and sacrifice some view of profit to obtain stability by the assistance of some monied man — a class of whom many are in your great city just gaping for such an opportunity to lay out cash to advantage.

"This difficulty — the want of solid cash — is an obstacle to all attempts whatsoever; but there is something, it would seem, peculiarly difficult in managing a theatre. All who practise the fine arts in any department are, from the very temperament necessary to success, more irritable, jealous, and capricious, than other men made up of heavier elements; but the jealousy among players is signally active, because their very persons are brought into direct comparison, and from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot they are pitted by the public in express rivalry against each other. Besides, greatly as the profession has risen in character of late years, theatrical talent must still be found frequently allied with imperfect general education, low habits, and sometimes the follies and vices which arise out of them. All this makes, I should think, a theatre very difficult to manage, and liable to sudden checks when your cattle *jibb*, or do not work kindly. I think you have much of the talent to manage this; and bating a little indolence, which you can always conquer when you have a mind and a motive, I know no one whose taste, temper, and good sense, make him more likely to gain and secure the necessary influence over the performers. But *il faut de l'argent* —you must be careful in your situation, that a check shall not throw you on the breakers, and for this there is no remedy but a handsome provision of the blunt. This is the second particular, I think, unfavourable to undertakings of a theatrical description, and against which I would wish to see you guarded by a more ample fund than your plan involves.

"You have of course ascertained from the books of the theatre that the returns of receipts are correct; but I see no pro-

vision made for wear and tear of stock, expense of getting up new pieces, &c., which, in such an undertaking, must be considerable. Perhaps it is included in the charge of £36 per night; but if not, it seems to me that it will materially alter your calculations for the worse, for you are naturally disposed to be liberal in such expenses, and the public will expect it. Without baits the fish cannot be caught. I do not state these particulars from any wish to avoid assisting you in this undertaking; much the contrary. If I saw the prospect of your getting fairly on the wing, nothing could give me more pleasure than to assist to the extent of my means, and I shall only, in that case, regret that they are at present more limited than I could wish, by circumstances which I will presently tell you. But I should not like to see you take flight, like the ingenious mechanist in Rasselas — only to flutter a few yards, and fall into the lake. This would be a most heart-breaking business, and would hang like a millstone about your neck for all your life. Capital and talent will do excellent things together; but depend on it, talent without capital will no more carry on an extensive and progressive undertaking of this nature, than a racehorse will draw a Newcastle waggon. Now, I cannot at present assist you with ready money, which is the great object in your undertaking. This year has been, owing to many reasons, the heaviest of my expenditure, and the least fruitful of profit, because various anxieties attending Walter's marriage, and feasting, &c., after it, have kept me from my usual lucrative labours. It has no doubt been a most advantageous concern, for he has got an amiable girl, whom he loves, and who is warmly attached to him, with a very considerable fortune. But I have had to find cash for the purchase of a troop for him — about £3500: *item*, the bride's jewels, and so forth, becoming her situation and fortune, £500: *item*, for a remount to him on joining his regiment, equipage for quarters, carriage, and other things, that they may enter life with a free income, £1000 at least. Moreover, I am a sharer to the extent of £1500 on a railroad, which will bring coals and lime here at half price, and double the rent of the arable part of my

property, but is dead outlay in the meantime; and I have shares in the oil-gas, and other promising concerns, not having resisted the mania of the day, though I have yielded to it but soberly; also, I have the dregs of Abbotsford House to pay for — and all besides my usual considerable expenditure; so I must look for some months to be put to every corner of my saddle. I could not let my son marry her like a beggar; but, in the meantime, I am like my namesake in the days of the crusades — Walter the Penniless.

"Every one grumbles at his own profession, but here is the devil of a calling for you, where a man pays £3000 for an annuity of £400 a-year and less — renounces his free-will in almost every respect — must rise at five every morning to see horses curried — dare not sleep out of a particular town without the leave of a cross colonel, who is often disposed to refuse it merely because he has the power to do so; and, last of all, may be sent to the most unhealthy climates to die of the rot, or be shot like a black-cock. There is a per contra, to be sure — fine clothes and fame; but the first must be paid for, and the other is not come by, by one out of the hundred. I shall be anxious to know what you are able to do. Your ready is the devil —

> 'The thing may to-morrow be all in your power,
> But the money, gadzooks, must be paid in an hour.'

If you were once set a-rolling, time would come round with me, and then I should be able to help you a little more than at present. Meanwhile, I am willing to help you with my credit by becoming one of your guarantees to the extent of £1250.

"But what I am most anxious about is to know how you raise the £5000 cash: if by bills and discounts, I beg to say I must decline having to do with the business at all; for besides the immense expense of renewals, that mode of raising money is always liable to some sudden check, which throws you on your back at once, and I should then have hurt myself and deprived myself of the means of helping you some

other way. If you can get such a sum in loan for a term of years certain, that would do well. Still better, I think, could you get a monied partner in the concern to pay the sum down, and hold some £2000 more ready for current expenses. . I wish to know whether in the £36 for nightly expenses you include your own salary, within which you would probably think it prudent to restrain your own expenses, at least for a year or two; for, believing as I do, that your calculation of £70 per night (five per cent. on the outlay) is rather sanguine, I would like to know that your own and Mr. Yates's expenses were provided for, so as to leave the receipts, whatever they may be, free to answer the burdens. If they do so, you will have great reason to be contented. I need not add that Theodore Hook's assistance will be *impayable*. On the whole, my apprehension is for want of money in the outset. Should you either start with marked success, or have friends sufficient to carry on at some disadvantage for a season or two, I should have little fear; but great attention and regularity will be necessary. You are no great accountant yourself, any more than I am, — but I trust Mr. Yates is. All rests with prudence and management. Murray is making a fortune for his sister and family on the very bargain which Siddons, poor fellow, could not have sustained for two years longer. If I have seemed more cautious in this matter than you might expect from my sincere regard for you, it is because caution is as necessary for you as myself; and I assure you I think as deeply on your account as on my own. I beg kind compliments to Mrs. Terry, and inclose a lock of my gray hair, which Jane desired me to send you for some brooch or clasp at Hamlet's. — Ever yours, very truly, WALTER SCOTT."

"*To the Same.*

"My Dear Terry, — You have long ere this heard from honest James that he accedes to your proposal of becoming one of your sureties. I did not think it right in the first instance either to encourage or deter him from taking this step,

but sent him the whole correspondence upon the subject, that he might judge for himself; and I fancy he concluded that his own risk of loss was not by any means in proportion to your fair prospect of advantage.

"There is an idea among some of your acquaintance, which I partly acquiesce in, that you are in general somewhat of a procrastinator. I believe I have noticed the same thing myself; but then I consider it the habit of one accustomed to alternations of severe exertion and great indolence; and I have no doubt that it will give place to the necessity of following out a regular, stated, and daily business — where every hour brings its own peculiar duties, and you feel yourself, like the mail-coach, compelled to be *in to time*. I know such routine always cures me of the habit of indolence, which on other occasions I give way to as much as any man. This objection to the success which all agree is in your own power, I have heard coupled with another, which is also founded on close observation of your character, and connected with an excellent point of it; it is, that you will be too desirous to do things perfectly well, to consider the *petite economie* necessary to a very extensive undertaking. This, however, is easily guarded against. I remember Mrs. John Kemble telling me how much she had saved by degrading some unfortunate figurantes into paper veils and ruffles. I think it was a round sum, and without going such lengths, I fear severer economy than one would like to practise is essential to making a theatre profitable. Now, I have mentioned the only two personal circumstances which induce envy to lift her voice against your prospects. I think it right you should know them, for there is something to be considered in both particulars; I would not mention them till the affair was finished, because I would not have you think I was sheltering myself under such apologies. That the perils rising out of them are not formidable in my eyes, I have sufficiently shown; and I think it right to mention them now. I know I need not apologize for my frankness, nor will you regard it either as an undue exercise of the privilege of an adviser, or an abuse of the circumstan-

ces in which this matter has placed us. — Yours ever, with best love to Mrs. Terry and Wat, W. SCOTT."

While this business of Terry's was under consideration, Scott asked me to go out with him one Saturday to Abbotsford, to meet Constable and James Ballantyne, who were to be there for a quiet consultation on some projects of great importance. I had shortly before assisted at a minor conclave held at Constable's villa of Polton, and was not surprised that Sir Walter should have considered his publisher's new plans worthy of very ample deliberation. He now opened them in more fulness of detail, and explained his views in a manner that might well excite admiration, not unmixed with alarm. Constable was meditating nothing less than a total revolution in the art and traffic of bookselling; and the exulting and blazing fancy with which he expanded and embellished his visions of success, hitherto undreamt of in the philosophy of the trade, might almost have induced serious suspicions of his sanity, but for the curious accumulation of pregnant facts on which he rested his justification, and the dexterous sagacity with which he uncoiled his practical inferences. He startled us at the outset by saying, "Literary genius may, or may not, have done its best; but printing and bookselling, as instruments for enlightening and entertaining mankind, and, of course, for making money, are as yet in mere infancy. Yes, the trade are in their cradle." Scott eyed the florid bookseller's beaming countenance, and the solemn stare with which the equally portly printer was listening, and pushing round the bottles with a hearty chuckle, bade me "Give our twa *sonsie babbies* a drap mother's milk." Constable sucked in fresh inspiration, and proceeded to

say that, wild as we might think him, his new plans had been suggested by, and were in fact mainly grounded upon, a sufficiently prosaic authority — namely, the annual schedule of assessed taxes, a copy of which interesting document he drew from his pocket, and substituted for his *D'Oyley*. It was copiously diversified, "text and margent," by figures and calculations in his own handwriting, which I for one might have regarded with less reverence, had I known at the time this "great arithmetician's" rooted aversion and contempt for all examination of his own balance-sheet. His lecture on these columns and ciphers was, however, as profound as ingenious. He had taken vast pains to fill in the number of persons who might fairly be supposed to pay the taxes for each separate article of luxury; and his conclusion was, that the immense majority of British families, endowed with liberal fortunes, had never yet conceived the remotest idea that their domestic arrangements were incomplete, unless they expended some considerable sum annually upon the purchase of books. "Take," said he, "this one absurd and contemptible *item* of the tax on hair-powder; the use of it is almost entirely gone out of fashion. Bating a few parsons' and lawyers' wigs, it may be said that hair-powder is confined to the *flunkeys*, and indeed to the livery servants of great and splendid houses exclusively; nay, in many even of these, it is already quite laid aside. Nevertheless, for each head that is thus vilified in Great Britain, a guinea is paid yearly to the Exchequer; and the taxes in that schedule are an army, compared to the purchasers of even the best and most popular of books." He went on in the same vein about armorial bearings, hunters, racers, and four-wheeled carriages; and having demonstrated that hundreds of thousands in this magnifi-

cent country held, as necessary to their personal comfort, and the maintenance of decent station, articles upon articles of costly elegance, of which their forefathers never dreamt, said that on the whole, however usual it was to talk of the extended scale of literary transactions in modern days, our self-love never deceived us more grossly than when we fancied our notions as to the matter of books had advanced in at all a corresponding proportion. "On the contrary," cried Constable, "I am satisfied that the demand for Shakspeare's plays, contemptible as we hold it to have been, in the time of Elizabeth and James, was more creditable to the classes who really indulged in any sort of elegance then, than the sale of Childe Harold or Waverley, triumphantly as people talk, is to the alleged expansion of taste and intelligence in this nineteenth century."

Scott helped him on by interposing, that at that moment he had a rich valley crowded with handsome houses under his view, and yet much doubted whether any laird within ten miles spent ten pounds per annum on the literature of the day — which he, of course, distinguished from its periodical press. "No," said Constable, "there is no market among them that's worth one's thinking about. They are contented with a review or a magazine, or at best with a paltry subscription to some circulating library forty miles off. But if I live for half-a-dozen years, I'll make it as impossible that there should not be a good library in every decent house in Britain as that the shepherd's ingle-nook should want the *saut poke*. Ay, and what's that?" he continued, warming and puffing; "why should the ingle-nook itself want a shelf for *the novels?*"— "I see your drift, my man," says Sir Walter; "you're for being like Billy Pitt in Gilray's print —

you want to get into the salt-box yourself." — "Yes," he responded (using a favourite adjuration) — "I have hitherto been thinking only of the wax lights, but before I'm a twelvemonth older I shall have my hand upon the tallow." — "Troth," says Scott, "you are indeed likely to be 'The grand Napoleon of the realms of *print*.'" — "If you outlive me," says Constable, with a regal smile, "I bespeak that line for my tomb-stone; but, in the meantime, may I presume to ask you to be my right-hand man when I open my campaign of Marengo? I have now settled my outline of operations — a three shilling or half-crown volume every month, which must and shall sell, not by thousands or tens of thousands, but by hundreds of thousands — ay, by millions! Twelve volumes in the year, a halfpenny of profit upon every copy of which will make me richer than the possession of all the copyrights of all the quartos that ever were, or will be, hot-pressed! — twelve volumes, so good that millions must wish to have them, and so cheap that every butcher's callant may have them, if he pleases to let me tax him sixpence a-week!"

Many a previous consultation, and many a solitary meditation too, prompted Scott's answer. "Your plan," said he, "cannot fail, provided the books be really good; but you must not start until you have not only leading columns, but depth upon depth of reserve in thorough order. I am willing to do my part in this grand enterprise. Often, of late, have I felt that the vein of fiction was nearly worked out; often, as you all know, have I been thinking seriously of turning my hand to history. I am of opinion that historical writing has no more been adapted to the demands of the increased circles among which literature does already find its way, than you

allege as to the shape and price of books in general. What say you to taking the field with a Life of the *other* Napoleon?"

The reader does not need to be told that the series of cheap volumes, subsequently issued under the title of "Constable's Miscellany," was the scheme on which this great bookseller was brooding. Before he left Abbotsford, it was arranged that the first number of this collection should consist of one half of Waverley; the second, of the first section of a "Life of Napoleon Buonaparte by the author of Waverley;" that this Life should be comprised in four of these numbers; and that, until the whole series of his novels should have been issued, a volume every second month, in this new and uncostly form, he should keep the Ballantyne press going with a series of historical works, to be issued on the alternate months. Such were, as far as Scott was concerned, the first outlines of a daring plan never destined to be carried into execution on the gigantic scale, or with the grand appliances which the projector contemplated, but destined, nevertheless, to lead the way in one of the greatest revolutions that literary history will ever have to record — a revolution not the less sure to be completed, though as yet, after the lapse of twelve years, we see only its beginnings.

Some circumstances in the progress of the Tales of the Crusaders, begun some months before, and now on the eve of publication, must have been uppermost in Scott's mind when he met Constable's proposals on this occasion with so much alacrity. The story of *The Betrothed* — (to which he was mainly prompted by the lively and instructing conversation on Welsh history and antiquities of his friend Archdeacon Williams) — found

no favour as it advanced with James Ballantyne; and so heavily did the critical printer's candid remonstrances weigh on the author, that he at length lost heart about the matter altogether, and determined to cancel it for ever. The tale, however, all but a chapter or two, had been printed off, and both publisher and printer paused about committing such a mass to the flames. The sheets were hung up meanwhile in Messrs. Ballantyne's warehouse, and Scott, roused by the spur of disappointment, began another story — The Talisman — in which James hailed better omens. His satisfaction went on increasing as the MS. flowed in upon him; and he at last pronounced The Talisman such a masterpiece, that The Betrothed might venture abroad under its wing. Sir Walter was now reluctant on that subject, and said he would rather write two more new novels than the few pages necessary to complete his unfortunate Betrothed. But while he hesitated, the German newspapers announced "*a new romance by the author of Waverley*" as about to issue from the press of Leipsig. There was some ground for suspecting that a set of the suspended sheets might have been purloined and sold to a pirate, and this consideration put an end to his scruples. And when the German did publish the fabrication, entitled *Walladmor*, it could no longer be doubtful that some reader of Scott's sheets had communicated at least the fact that he was breaking ground in Wales.

Early in June, then, the Tales of the Crusaders were put forth; and, as Mr. Ballantyne had predicted, the brightness of the Talisman dazzled the eyes of the million as to the defects of the twin-story. Few of these publications had a more enthusiastic greeting; and Scott's literary plans were, as the reader will see reason to infer,

considerably modified in consequence of the new burst of applause which attended the brilliant procession of his Saladin and Cœur de Lion.

To return for a moment to our merry conclave at Abbotsford. Constable's vast chapter of embryo schemes was discussed more leisurely on the following Monday morning, when we drove to the crags of Smailholm and the Abbey of Dryburgh, both poet and publisher talking over the past and the future course of their lives, and agreeing, as far as I could penetrate, that the years to come were likely to be more prosperous than any they had as yet seen. In the evening, too, this being his friend's first visit since the mansion had been completed, Scott (though there were no ladies and few servants) had the hall and library lighted up, that he might show him everything to the most sparkling advantage. With what serenity did he walk about those splendid apartments, handling books, expounding armour and pictures, and rejoicing in the Babylon which he had built!

If the reader has not recently looked into the original Introduction to the Tales of the Crusaders, it will amuse him to trace in that little extravaganza Sir Walter's own embellishment of these colloquies with Constable and Ballantyne. The title is, "Minutes of Sederunt of the Shareholders designing to form a Joint-Stock Company, united for the purpose of Writing and Publishing the Class of Works called the Waverley Novels, held in the Waterloo Tavern, Regent Bridge, Edinburgh, on the 1st of June 1825." The notion of casting a preface into this form could hardly have occurred in any other year; the humorist had not far to seek for his "palpable hit." The "Gentlemen and others interested in the celebrated publications called the Waverley Novels," had all

participated in the general delusions which presented so broad a mark; and their own proper "bubbles" were at the biggest — in other words, near enough the bursting.

As regards Sir Walter himself, it is not possible now to recall the jocularities of this essay without wonder and sadness. His own share in speculations remote from literature, was not indeed a very heavy one; but how remarkable that a passage like the following should have dropped from his pen who was just about to see the apparently earth-built pillars of his worldly fortune shattered in ruin, merely because, not contented with being the first author of his age, he had chosen also to be his own printer and his own bookseller!

"In the patriarchal period," we read, "a man is his own weaver, tailor, butcher, shoemaker, and so forth; and, in the age of Stock-companies, as the present may be called, an individual may be said, in one sense, to exercise the same plurality of trades. In fact, a man who has dipt largely into these speculations, may combine his own expenditure with the improvement of his own income, just like the ingenious hydraulic machine, which, by its very waste, raises its own supplies of water. Such a person buys his bread from his own Baking Company, his milk and cheese from his own Dairy Company, takes off a new coat for the benefit of his own Clothing Company, illuminates his house to advance his own Gas Establishment, and drinks an additional bottle of wine for the benefit of the General Wine Importation Company, of which he is himself a member. Every act, which would otherwise be one of mere extravagance, is, to such a person, seasoned with the *odor lucri*, and reconciled to prudence. Even if the price of the article consumed be extravagant, and the quality indifferent, the person, who is in a manner his own customer, is only imposed upon for his own benefit.

Nay, if the Joint-stock Company of Undertakers shall unite with the Medical Faculty, as proposed by the late facetious Dr. G——, under the firm of Death and the Doctor, the shareholder might contrive to secure to his heirs a handsome slice of his own death-bed and funeral expenses."

Since I have quoted this Introduction, I may as well give also the passage in which the "Eidolon Chairman" is made to announce the new direction his exertions were about to take, in furtherance of the grand "Joint-stock Adventure" for which Constable had been soliciting his alliance. The paternal shadow thus addresses his mutinous offspring — Cleishbotham, Oldbuck, Clutterbuck, Dryasdust, and the rest: —

"It signifies nothing speaking — I will no longer avail myself of such weak ministers as you — I will discard you — I will unbeget you, as Sir Anthony Absolute says — I will leave you and your whole hacked stock in trade — your caverns and your castles — your modern antiques and your antiquated moderns — your confusion of times, manners, and circumstances — your properties, as player-folk say of scenery and dresses — the whole of your exhausted expedients, to the fools who choose to deal with them. I will vindicate my own fame with my own right hand, without appealing to such halting assistants,

'Whom I have used for sport, rather than need.'

— I will lay my foundations better than on quicksands — I will rear my structure of better materials than painted cards; in a word, I will write HISTORY!" . . . . . .

"As the confusion began to abate, more than one member of the meeting was seen to touch his forehead significantly, while Captain Clatterbuck humm'd,

'Be by your friends advised,
Too rash, too hasty dad,

Maugre your bolts and wise head,
The world will think you mad.' *

"The world, and you, gentlemen, may think what you please," said the Chairman, elevating his voice; "but I intend to write the most wonderful book which the world ever read — a book in which every incident shall be incredible, yet strictly true — a work recalling recollections with which the ears of this generation once tingled, and which shall be read by our children with an admiration approaching to incredulity. Such shall be the LIFE OF NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE, by the AUTHOR OF WAVERLEY!" †

Sir Walter begun, without delay, what was meant to be a very short preliminary sketch of the French Revolution, prior to the appearance of his hero upon the scene of action. This, he thought, might be done almost *currente calamo;* for his personal recollection of all the great events as they occurred was vivid, and he had not failed to peruse every book of any considerable importance on these subjects as it issued from the press. He apprehended the necessity, on the other hand, of more laborious study in the way of reading than he had for many years had occasion for, before he could enter with advantage upon Buonaparte's military career; and Constable accordingly set about collecting a new library of printed materials, which continued from day to day pouring in upon him, till his little parlour in Castle Street looked more like an auctioneer's premises than an author's. The first waggon delivered itself of about a hundred huge folios of the Moniteur; and London, Paris, Amsterdam, and Brussels, were all laid under contribution to meet the bold demands of his magnificent

* *Midas* — a farce.
† See Introduction to *Tales of the Crusaders.*

purveyor; while he himself and his confidential friends embraced every possible means of securing the use of written documents at home and abroad. The rapid accumulation of books and MSS. was at once flattering and alarming; and one of his notes to me, about the middle of June, had these rhymes by way of postscript: —

"When with poetry dealing
Room enough in a shieling:
Neither cabin nor hovel
Too small for a novel:
Though my back I should rub
On Diogenes' tub,
How my fancy could prance
In a dance of romance!
But my house I must swap
With some Brobdignag chap,
Ere I grapple, God bless me! with Emperor Nap."

In the meantime he advanced with his Introduction; and, catching fire as the theme expanded before him, had so soon several chapters in his desk, without having travelled over half the ground assigned for them, that Constable saw it would be in vain to hope for the completion of the work within four tiny duodecimos. They resolved that it should be published, in the first instance, as a separate book, in four volumes of the same size with the Tales of the Crusaders, but with more pages and more letterpress to each page. Scarcely had this been settled before it became obvious, that four such volumes, however closely printed, would never suffice; and the number was week after week extended — with corresponding alterations as to the rate of the author's payment. Mr. Constable still considered the appearance of the second edition of the Life of Napoleon in his Mis-

cellany as the great point on which the fortunes of that undertaking were to turn; and its commencement was in consequence adjourned; which, however, must have been the case at any rate, as he found, on inquiry, that the stock on hand of the already various editions of the Waverley Novels was much greater than he had calculated; and therefore some interval must be allowed to elapse, before, with fairness to the retail trade, he could throw that long series of volumes into any cheaper form.

ABBOTSFORD IN 1825.

[*Various critics and correspondents have complained that the first edition of these Memoirs did not include any clear and particular description of the House of Abbotsford, in its finished condition. It appeared to me that Sir Walter's letters contained as much information on the subject as might satisfy most readers; but I now insert the fullest account that I know of — one drawn up in* 1829, *for a keepsake called the Anniversary, of which Mr. Allan Cunningham had at that time the management. It was written in the character of an imaginary American, supposed to visit Scotland in the summer of* 1825, *and to examine the place, when Sir Walter was absent, under the guidance of one of the neighbouring gentlemen, tolerably familiar with its history.*

I am afraid there are some inaccuracies in the sketch — but it is probably nearer the truth than anything I could substitute for it, now that many years have passed since

I saw Abbotsford. Some passages have been omitted, and a few mis-statements corrected.]

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"SOME fifteen or sixteen years ago, * * * * tells me, there was not a more unlovely spot, in this part of the world, than that on which Abbotsford now exhibits all its quaint architecture and beautiful accompaniment of garden and woodland. A mean farm-house stood on part of the site of the present edifice; a "kail-yard" bloomed where the stately embattled court-yard now spreads itself; and for a thousand acres of flourishing plantations, half of which have all the appearance of being twice as old as they really are, there was but a single long straggling stripe of unthriving firs. The river must needs remain *in statu quo;* and I will not believe that any place so near those clearest and sweetest of all waters, could ever have been quite destitute of charms. The scene, however, was no doubt wild enough: a naked moor — a few turnip fields painfully reclaimed from it — a Scotch cottage — a Scotch farm-yard, and some Scotch firs. It is difficult to imagine a more complete contrast to the Abbotsford of 1825.

"Sir W. is, as you have no doubt heard, a most zealous agriculturist, and aboriculturist especially; and he is allowed to have done things with this estate, since it came into his possession, which would have been reckoned wonders, even if they had occupied the whole of a clever and skilful man's attention, during more years than have elapsed since he began to write himself Laird of Abbotsford. He has some excellent arable land on the banks of the Tweed, and towards the little town of Melrose, which lies three miles from the mansion; but the bulk of the property is hilly country, with deep narrow dells interlacing it. Of this he has planted fully one half, and it is admitted on all hands, that his rising forest has been laid out,

arranged, and managed with consummate taste, care, and success; so much so, that the general appearance of Tweedside, for some miles, is already quite altered by the graceful ranges of his woodland; and that the produce of these plantations must, in the course of twenty or thirty years more, add immensely to the yearly rental of the estate. In the meantime, the shelter afforded by the woods to the sheep-walks reserved amidst them, has prodigiously improved the pasturage, and half the surface yields already double the rent the whole was ever thought capable of affording, while in the old unprotected condition. All through these woods there are broad riding-ways, kept in capital order, and conducted in such excellent taste, that we might wander for weeks amidst their windings without exhausting the beauties of the Poet's lounge. There are scores of waterfalls in the ravines, and near every one of them you find benches or bowers at the most picturesque points of view. There are two or three small mountain lakes included in the domain — the largest perhaps a mile in circumference; and of these also every advantage has been taken.

"But I am keeping you too long away from 'The Roof-tree of Monkbarns,' which is situated on the brink of the last of a series of irregular hills, descending from the elevation of the Eildons to the Tweed. On all sides, except towards the river, the house connects itself with the gardens (according to the old fashion now generally condemned); — so that there is no want of air and space about the habitation. The building is such a one, I dare say, as nobody but he would ever have dreamed of erecting; or if he had, escaped being quizzed for his pains. Yet it is eminently imposing in its general effect; and in most of its details, not only full of historical interest, but beauty also. It is no doubt a thing of shreds and patches, but they have been combined by a masterly hand; and if there be some whimsicalities, that in an ordinary case might have called up a smile, who is likely now or hereafter to contemplate such a monument of such a man's peculiar tastes and fancies, without feelings of a far different order?

"By the principal approach you come very suddenly on the edifice; — as the French would say, 'Vous *tombez* sur le château;' but this evil, if evil it be, was unavoidable, in consequence of the vicinity of a public road, which cuts off the *chateau* and its *plaisance* from the main body of park and wood. The gateway is a lofty arch rising out of an embattled wall of considerable height; and the *jougs*, as they are styled, those well-known emblems of feudal authority, hang rusty at the side; this pair being relics from that great citadel of the old Douglasses, Thrieve Castle in Galloway. On entering, you find yourself within an enclosure of perhaps half an acre, two sides thereof being protected by the high wall above mentioned, all along which, inside, a trellised walk extends itself — broad, cool, and dark overhead with roses and honeysuckles. The third side, to the east, shows a screen of open arches of Gothic stone-work, filled between with a net-work of iron, not visible until you come close to it, and affording therefore delightful glimpses of the gardens, which spread upwards with many architectural ornaments of turret, porch, urn, vase, &c. This elegant screen abuts on the eastern extremity of the house, which runs along the whole of the northern side (and a small part of the western) of the great enclosure. Within this enclosure there is room for a piece of the most *elaborate* turf; and rosaries, of all manner of shapes and sizes, gradually connect this green pavement with the roof of the trellis-walk, a verdant cloister, over which appears the grey wall with its little turrets; and over that again climb oak, elm, birch, and hazel, up a steep bank — so steep, that the trees, young as they are, give already all the effect of a sweeping amphitheatre of wood. The back-ground on that side is wholly forest; on the east, garden loses itself in forest by degrees; on the west, there is wood on wood also, but with glimpses of the Tweed between; and in the distance (some half-a-dozen miles off) a complete *sierra*, the ridge of the mountains between Tweed and Yarrow.

"The house is more than one hundred and fifty feet long in front, as I paced it; was built at two different onsets; has a

tall tower at either end, the one not the least like the other; presents sundry *crowfooted, alias* zigzagged, gables to the eye; a myriad of indentations and parapets, and machicollated eaves; most fantastic waterspouts; labelled windows, not a few of them painted glass; groups of right Elizabethan chimneys; balconies of divers fashions, greater and lesser; stones carved with heraldries innumerable, let in here and there in the wall; and a very noble projecting gateway — a fac-simile, I am told, of that appertaining to a certain dilapidated royal palace, which long ago seems to have caught in a particular manner the Poet's fancy, as witness the stanza,

> 'Of all the palaces so fair,
> Built for the royal dwelling,
> In Scotland, far beyond compare,
> Linlithgow is excelling.' *

"From this porchway, which is spacious and airy, quite open to the elements in front, and adorned with some enormous petrified stag-horns overhead, you are admitted by a pair of folding-doors at once into the hall, and an imposing *coup d'œil* the first glimpse of the Poet's interior does present. The lofty windows, only two in number, being wholly covered with coats of arms, the place appears as dark as the twelfth century, on your first entrance from noonday; but the delicious coolness of the atmosphere is luxury enough for a minute or two; and by degrees your eyes get accustomed to the effect of those 'storied panes,' and you are satisfied that you stand in one of the most picturesque of apartments. The hall is about forty feet long by twenty in height and breadth. The walls are of richly carved oak, most part of it exceedingly dark, and brought, it seems, from the old Abbey of Dunfermline: the roof, a series of pointed arches of the same, each beam presenting in the centre a shield of arms richly blazoned: of these shields there are sixteen, enough to bear all the quarterings of a perfect pedigree if the Poet could show them; but on the maternal side (at the extremity) there are two or

* *Marmion*, Canto IV. Stanza 15.

three blanks (of the same sort that made Louis le Grand unhappy) which have been covered with sketches of cloudland, and equipped with the appropriate motto, '*Nox alta velat.*' There is a door at the eastern end, over and round which the Baronet has placed another series of escutcheons; these are the memorials of his immediate personal connexions, the bearings of his friends and companions.* All around the cornice of this noble room there runs a continued series of blazoned shields of another sort still; at the centre of one end I saw the bloody heart of Douglas, and opposite to that the Royal Lion of Scotland,— and between the ribs there is an inscription in black letter, which I after some trials read. To the best of my recollection, the words are — 'These be the Coat Armories of the Clannis and Chief Men of name wha keepit the marchys of Scotland in the aulde time for the Kinge. Trewe ware they in their tyme, and in their defence God them defendit.' There are from thirty to forty shields thus distinguished, — Douglas, Soulis, Buccleugh, Maxwell, Johnstoune, Glendoning, Herries, Rutherford, Kerr, Elliott, Pringle, Home, and all the other heroes of the Border Minstrelsy. The floor of this hall is black and white marble, from the Hebrides, wrought lozenge-wise; and the upper walls are completely hung with arms and armour. Two full suits of splendid steel occupy niches at the eastern end; the one an English suit of Henry the Fifth's time, the other an Italian, not quite so old. The variety of cuirasses, black and white, plain and sculptured, is endless; helmets are in equal profusion; stirrups and spurs, of every fantasy, dangle about and below them; and there are swords of every order, from the enormous two-handed weapon with which the Swiss peasants dared to withstand the spears of the Austrian chivalry, to the claymore of the "Forty-five," and the rapier of Dettingen. Indeed, I might come still lower; for, among other spoils, I saw Polish lances, gathered by the Author of Paul's Letters on the Field of Waterloo, and a complete suit of chain mail taken off the corpse of one of Tippoo's body-guard at Seringapatam. A

* The Arms of Morritt, Erskine, Rose, &c. &c. &c.

series of German executioners' swords was pointed out to me, on the blade of one of which are the arms of Augsburg, and a legend, which may be thus rendered —

> Dust, when I strike, to dust: From sleepless grave,
> Sweet Jesu! stoop, a sin-stained soul to save.

"'Stepping westward' (as Wordsworth says) from this hall, you find yourself in a narrow, low-arched room, which runs quite across the house, having a blazoned window again at either extremity, and filled all over with smaller pieces of armour and weapons, — such as swords, firelocks, spears, arrows, darts, daggers, &c. &c. &c. Here are the pieces esteemed most precious by reason of their histories respectively. I saw, among the rest, Rob Roy's gun, with his initials R. M. C. (*i. e.* Robert Macgregor Campbell), round the touchhole; the blunderbuss of Hofer, a present to Sir Walter from his friend Sir Humphry Davy;* a magnificent sword, as magnificently mounted, the gift of Charles the First to the great Montrose; the hunting bottle of bonnie King Jamie; Buonaparte's pistols (found in his carriage at Waterloo, I believe), *cum multis aliis*. I should have mentioned that stag horns, and bulls' horns (the petrified relics of the old mountain monster, I mean), and so forth, are suspended in great abundance above all the doorways of these armories; and that, in one corner, a dark one as it ought to be, there is a complete assortment of the old Scottish instruments of torture, not forgetting the thumbikens under which Cardinal Carstairs did *not* flinch, and the more terrific iron crown of Wishart the Martyr, being a sort of barred head-piece, screwed on the victim at the stake, to prevent him from crying aloud in his agony. In short, there can be no doubt that, like Grose of merry memory, the mighty minstrel

> '— Has a fouth o' auld nicknackets,
> Rusty airn caps and jinglin jackets,
> Wad haud the Lothians three in tackets
> A towmont guid.'

* See the *Life of Sir Humphry Davy*, by his Brother, vol. i. p. 506.

These relics of other, and for the most part darker years, are disposed, however, with so much grace and elegance, that I doubt if Mr. Hope himself would find anything to quarrel with in the beautiful apartments which contain them. In the hall, when the weather is hot, the Baronet is accustomed to dine; and a gallant refectory no question it must make. A ponderous chandelier of painted glass swings from the roof; and the chimney-piece (the design copied from the stone work of the Abbot's Stall at Melrose) would hold rafters enough for a Christmas fire of the good old times. Were the company suitably attired, a dinner party here would look like a scene in the Mysteries of Udolpho.

"Beyond the smaller, or rather I should say the narrower armoury, lies the dining-parlour proper, however; and though there is nothing Udolphoish here, yet I can well believe that, when lighted up and the curtains down at night, the place may give no bad notion of the private snuggery of some lofty lord abbot of the time of the Canterbury Tales. The room is a handsome one, with a low and richly carved roof of dark oak again; a huge projecting bow-window, and the dais elevated *more majorum;* the ornaments of the roof, niches for lamps, &c. &c., in short, all the minor details, are, I believe, *fac similes* after Melrose. The walls are hung in crimson, but almost entirely covered with pictures, of which the most remarkable are — the parliamentary general, Lord Essex, a full length on horseback; the Duke of Monmouth, by Lely; a capital Hogarth, by himself; Prior and Gay, both by Jervas; and the head of Mary Queen of Scots, in a charger, painted by *Amias Cawood* the day after the decapitation at Fotheringay, and sent some years ago as a present to Sir Walter from a Prussian nobleman, in whose family it had been for more than two centuries. It is a most death-like performance, and the countenance answers well enough to the coins of the unfortunate beauty, though not at all to any of the portraits I have happened to see. Among various family pictures, I noticed particularly Sir Walter's great-grandfather, the old cavalier mentioned in one of the epistles in Marmion,

who let his beard grow after the execution of Charles the First. There is also a portrait of Lucy Walters, mother to the Duke of Monmouth; and another of Anne Duchess of Buccleugh, the same who,

> 'In pride of youth, in beauty's bloom,
> Had wept o'er Monmouth's bloody tomb.'

Beyond and alongside are narrowish passages, which make one fancy one's self in the penetralia of some dim old monastery; for roofs and walls and windows (square, round, and oval alike) are sculptured in stone, after the richest relics of Melrose and Roslin Chapel. One of these leads to a charming breakfast-room, which looks to the Tweed on one side, and towards Yarrow and Ettrick, famed in song, on the other: a cheerful room, fitted up with novels, romances, and poetry, at one end; and the other walls covered with a valuable and beautiful collection of water-colour drawings, chiefly by Turner, and Thomson of Duddingstone — the designs, in short, for the magnificent work entitled "Provincial Antiquities of Scotland." There is one good oil painting over the chimney-piece — Fast Castle by Thomson, *alias* the Wolf's Crag of the Bride of Lammermoor — and some large black and white drawings of the Vision of Don Roderick, by Sir James Steuart of Allanbank (whose illustrations of Marmion and Mazeppa you have seen or heard of), are at one end of the parlour. The room is crammed with queer cabinets and boxes, and in a niche there is a bust of old Henry Mackenzie, by Joseph of Edinburgh. Returning towards the armoury, you have, on one side of a most religious-looking corridor, a small greenhouse, with a fountain playing before it — the very fountain that in days of yore graced the cross of Edinburgh, and used to flow with claret at the coronation of the Stuarts — a pretty design, and a standing monument of the barbarity of modern innovation. From the small armoury you pass into the drawing-room, another handsome and spacious apartment, with antique ebony furniture and crimson silk hangings, cabinets, china, and mirrors *quantum suff.*, and some portraits; among

the rest, Dryden, by Lely, with his grey hairs floating about in a most picturesque style, eyes full of wildness, presenting the old bard, I take it, in one of those "tremulous moods" in which we have it on record he appeared when interrupted in the midst of his Alexander's Feast. From this you pass into the largest of all these rooms, the library. It is an oblong of some fifty feet by thirty, with a projection in the centre, opposite the fire-place, terminating in a grand bow-window, fitted up with books also, and, in fact, constituting a sort of chapel to the church. The roof is of carved oak again — a very rich pattern — chiefly *à la* Roslin; and the book-cases, which are also of richly carved oak, reach high up the walls all round. The collection amounts, in this room, to some fifteen or twenty thousand volumes, arranged according to their subjects: British history and antiquities filling the whole of the chief wall; English poetry and drama, classics and miscellanies, one end; foreign literature, chiefly French and German, the other. The cases on the side opposite the fire are wired, and locked, as containing articles very precious and very portable. One consists entirely of books and MSS. relating to the insurrections of 1715 and 1745; and another (within the recesses of the bow-window) of treatises *de re magica*, both of these being (I am told, and can well believe) in their several ways, collections of the rarest curiosity. My cicerone pointed out in one corner a magnificent set of Mountfaucon, fifteen volumes folio, bound in the richest manner in scarlet, and stamped with the royal arms, the gift of King George IV. There are few living authors of whose works presentation copies are not to be found here. My friend showed me inscriptions of that sort, in, I believe, every European dialect extant. The books are all in prime condition, and bindings that would satisfy Dr. Dibdin. The only picture is Sir Walter's eldest son, in hussar uniform, and holding his horse — by Allan of Edinburgh — a noble portrait, over the fire-place; and the only bust is that of Shakspeare, from the Avon monument, in a small niche in the centre of the east side. On a rich stand of porphyry, in one corner, reposes a tall silver urn,

filled with bones from the Piræus, and bearing the inscription, "Given by George Gordon, Lord Byron, to Sir Walter Scott, Bart."

"Connected with this fine room, and fronting — which none of the other sitting-rooms do — to the south, is a smaller library, the *sanctum* of the Author. This room, which seems to be a crib of about twenty feet, contains, of what is properly called furniture, nothing but a small writing-table in the centre, a plain arm-chair covered with black leather — and a single chair besides; plain symptoms that this is no place for company. On either side of the fire-place there are shelves filled with books of reference, chiefly, of course, folios; but except these, there are no books save the contents of a light gallery which runs round three sides of the room, and is reached by a hanging stair of carved oak in one corner. There are only two portraits — an original of the beautiful and melancholy head of Claverhouse (Bonny Dundee), and a small full-length of Rob Roy. Various little antique cabinets stand round about, each having a bust on it. Stothard's Canterbury Pilgrims are over the mantle-piece; above them is a Highland target, with a star of claymores; and in one corner I saw a collection of really useful weapons — those of the forest-craft, to wit — axes and bills, and so forth, of every calibre.

"In one corner of the *sanctum* there is a little holy of holies, in the shape of a closet, which looks like the oratory of some dame of old romance, and opens into the gardens; and the tower which furnishes this below, forms above a private staircase accessible from the gallery, and leading to the upper regions.

"The view to the Tweed from all the principal apartments is beautiful. You look out from among bowers over a lawn of sweet turf, upon the clearest of all streams, fringed with the wildest of birch woods, and backed with the green hills of Ettrick Forest."

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CHAPTER LXIII.

Excursion to Ireland — Reception in Dublin — Wicklow — Edgeworthstown — Killarney — Cork — Castle Blarney, &c. — Letters from Moore and Canning — Llangollen — Elleray — Storrs — Lowther.

1825.

BEFORE the Court of Session rose in July, Sir Walter had made considerable progress in his Sketch of the French Revolution; but it was agreed that he should make his promised excursion to Ireland before any MS. went to the printers. He had seen no more of the sister island than Dunluce and the Giant's Causeway, of which we have his impressions in the Lighthouse Diary of 1814; his curiosity about the scenery and the people was lively; and besides the great object of seeing his son and daughter-in-law under their own roof, and the scarcely inferior pleasure of another meeting with Miss Edgeworth, he looked forward to renewing his acquaintance with several accomplished persons, who had been serviceable to him in his labours upon Swift. But, illustriously as Ireland has contributed to the English Library, he had always been accustomed to hear that almost no books were now published there, and fewer sold than in any other country calling itself civilized; and he had naturally concluded that apathy and indifference prevailed as to literature itself, and of course as

to literary men. He had not, therefore, formed the remotest anticipation of the kind of reception which awaited him in Dublin, and indeed throughout the island wherever he traversed it.

On the day after he dispatched the following letter, he had the satisfaction of seeing his son gazetted as Captain.

"*To Walter Scott, Esq., 15th Hussars, 10 Stephen's Green, Dublin.*

"Edinburgh, 16th June, 1825.

"My Dear Walter, — I shall wait with some impatience for this night's Gazette. I have written to Coutts to pay the money so soon as you are in possession.

"On Saturday 11th, I went to Blair-Adam, and had a delicious stroll among the woods. The roe-deer are lying as thick there as in the Highlands, and I dare say they must be equally so at Lochore: so you will have some of the high game. They are endeavouring to destroy them, which they find very difficult. It is a pity they do so much mischief to the woods, for otherwise they are the most beautiful objects in nature; and were they at Abbotsford, I could not, I think, have the heart to make war on them. Two little fawns came into the room at tea-time and drank cream. They had the most beautiful dark eyes and little dark muzzles, and were scarce so big as Miss Fergusson's Italian greyhound. The Chief-Commissioner offered them to me; but, to keep them tame would have been impossible, on account of the dogs, and to turn them loose would have been wilfully entailing risk on the plantations which have cost me so much money and trouble. There was then a talk of fattening them for the kitchen, a proposal which would have driven mamma distracted.

"We spent Monday on a visit to Lochore, and in planning the road which is so much wanted. The Chief-Commissioner is an excellent manager, and has undertaken to treat with

Mr. Wemyss of East Blair, through a part of whose property the line lies, but just at a corner, and where it will be as convenient for his property as Lochore.

"I am glad Jane looks after her own affairs. It is very irksome, to be sure; but then one must do it, or be eaten up by their servants, like Actæon by his hounds. Talking of hounds, I have got a second Maida, but he is not yet arrived. Nimrod is his name.

"I keep my purpose as expressed in my last. I might, perhaps, persuade mamma to come, but she is unhappy in steamboats, bad beds, and all the other inconveniences of travelling. Sir Adam and Lady Fergusson, as I hear, are thinking of stirring towards you. I hope they will allow our visit to be over in the first instance, as it would overtax Jane and you — otherwise I should like to see the merry knight in Ireland, where I suppose he would prove *Ipsis Hibernis Hibernior*, more Irish than the natives.

"I have given Charles his choice between France and Ireland, and shall have his answer in two or three days. Will he be *de trop* if we can pack him up in the little barouche?

"Your commentary on Sir D. Dundas's confused hash of regulations, which, for the matter of principle, might be shortened to a dozen, puts me in mind of old Sir William Erskine's speech to him, when all was in utter confusion at the retreat from before Dunkirk, and Sir William came down to protect the rear. In passing Sir David, the tough old veteran exclaimed, 'Davie, ye donnert idiot, where's a' your *peevioys* (pivots) the day?'

"As to your early hours, no man ought to be in bed at seven in summer time — I never am; your four o'clock is rather premature. — Yours, with kindest remembrances to Jane, WALTER SCOTT.

"P. S. — Yours just received — dateless as was your former. I suppose it is a family fault. What I have written will show that the cash matters are *bang-up*. A comparison of the dates will show there has been no voluntary delay on my part; in-

deed, what motive could I have for leaving money without interest in the hands of a London banker? But we are corresponding at a triangle, when you write to me and I to London. I will write to Jane to scold her for her ladylike fears about our reception: to find you happy will be the principal part of my welcome; for the rest, a slice of plain meat of any kind — a cigar — and a little *potheen*, are worth turtle and burgundy to my taste. As for poor dear stupid ———, there is only one answer, which the clown in one of Shakspeare's plays says will be a fitting reply to *all* questions — *Oh Lord, sir!!!*"

It did not suit either Lady Scott or her eldest daughter to be of the Irish expedition; Anne Scott and myself accompanied Sir Walter. We left Edinburgh on the 8th of July in a light open carriage, and after spending a few days among our friends in Lanarkshire, we embarked at Glasgow in a steamer for Belfast. Sir Walter kept no diary during this excursion, and the bustle and tumult throughout were such that he found time to write but very few letters. From my own to the ladies left at home, I could easily draw up a pretty exact journal of our proceedings; but I shall content myself with noting a few particulars more immediately connected with the person of Scott — for I am very sensible, on looking over what I set down at the moment, that there was hardly opportunity even for him to draw any conclusions of serious value on the structure and ordinary habits of society in Ireland, to say nothing of the vexed questions of politics and administration; and such features of natural beauty and historical interest as came under his view have been painted over and over again by native writers, with whom hasty observers should not be ambitious of competing.

The steamboat, besides a crowd of passengers of all

possible classes, was lumbered with a cargo offensive enough to the eye and the nostrils, but still more disagreeable from the anticipations and reflections it could not fail to suggest. Hardly had our carriage been lashed on the deck before it disappeared from our view amidst mountainous packages of old clothes; — the cast-off raiment of the Scotch beggars was on its way to a land where beggary is the staple of life. The captain assured us that he had navigated nearly forty years between the West of Scotland and the sister island, and that his freights from the Clyde were very commonly of this description; pigs and potatoes being the usual return. Sir Walter rather irritated a military passenger (a stout old Highlander), by asking whether it had never occurred to him that the beautiful checkery of the clan tartans might have originated in a pious wish on the part of the Scottish Gael to imitate the tatters of the parent race. After soothing the veteran into good-humour, by some anecdotes of the Celtic splendours of August, 1822, he remarked that if the Scotch Highlanders were really descended in the main from the Irish blood, it seemed to him the most curious and difficult problem in the world to account for the startling contrasts in so many points of their character, temper, and demeanour; and entered into some disquisition on this subject, which I am sorry I cannot repeat in detail. The sum of his opinion was, that while courage and generous enthusiasm of spirit, kindness of heart, and great strength and purity of domestic affection, characterized them equally, the destruction, in the course of endless feuds, and wars, and rebellions, of the native aristocracy of Ireland, had robbed that people of most of the elements of internal civilization; and avowed his belief, that had the Highlanders been deprived, under

similar circumstances, of their own chiefs, they would have sunk, from the natural poverty of their regions, into depths of barbarity not exampled even in the history of Ireland. The old soldier (who had taken an early opportunity of intimating his own near relationship to the chief of his sept) nodded assent, and strutted from our part of the deck with the dignity of a MacTurk. — "But then," Sir Walter continued — (watching the Colonel's retreat) — "but then comes the queerest point of all. How is it that our solemn, proud, dignified Celt, with a soul so alive to what is elevating and even elegant in poetry and feeling, is so supereminently dull as respects all the lighter play of fancy? The Highlander never understands wit or humour — Paddy, despite all his misery and privations, overflows with both. I suppose he is the gayest fellow in the world, except the only worse-used one still, the West-Indian nigger. This is their make-up — but it is to me the saddest feature in the whole story."

A voyage down the Firth of Clyde is enough to make anybody happy: nowhere can the home tourist, at all events, behold, in the course of one day, such a succession and variety of beautiful, romantic, and majestic scenery: on one hand, dark mountains and castellated shores — on the other, rich groves and pastures, interspersed with elegant villas and thriving towns — the bright estuary between, alive with shipping, and diversified with islands.

It may be supposed how delightful such a voyage was in a fine day of July, with Scott, always as full of glee on any trip as a schoolboy; crammed with all the traditions and legends of every place we passed; and too happy to pour them out for the entertainment of his

companions on deck. After dinner, too, he was the charm of the table. A worthy old Bailie of Glasgow sat by him, and shared fully in the general pleasure; though his particular source of interest and satisfaction was, that he had got into such close quarters with a live Sheriff and Clerk of Session, — and this gave him the opportunity of discussing sundry knotty points of police law, as to which our steerage passengers might perhaps have been more curious than most of those admitted to the symposium of the cabin. Sir Walter, however, was as ready for the rogueries of the Broomielaw, as for the mystic antiquities of Balclutha, or the discomfiture of the Norsemen at Largs, or Bruce's adventures in Arran. I remember how this new acquaintance chuckled when he, towards the conclusion of our first bowl of punch, said he was not surprised to find himself gathering much instruction from the Bailie's conversation on his favourite topics, since the most eminent and useful of the police magistrates of London (Colquhoun) had served his apprenticeship in the Town Chamber of Glasgow. The Bailie insisted for a second bowl, and volunteered to be the manufacturer; "for," quoth he (with a sly wink), "I am reckoned a fair hand, though not equal to *my father, the deacon.*" Scott smiled in acquiescence, and, the ladies having by this time withdrawn, said he was glad to find the celebrated beverage of the city of St. Mungo had not fallen into desuetude. The Bailie extolled the liquor he was brewing, and quoted Sir John Sinclair's Code of Health and Longevity for the case of a gentleman well known to himself, who lived till ninety, and had been drunk upon it every night for half-a-century. But Bailie * * * was a devout elder of the kirk, and did not tell his story without one or two groans that his doctrine

should have such an example to plead. Sir Walter said, he could only hope that manners were mended in other respects since the days when a popular minister of the last age (one Mr. Thom), renowned for satirical humour, as well as for high-flying zeal, had demolished all his own chances of a Glasgow benefice, by preaching before the Town-Council from this text in Hosea: — "Ephraim's drink is sour, and he hath committed whoredom continually." The Bailie's brow darkened (like Nicol Jarvie's when they *misca'd Rab*); he groaned deeper than before, and said he feared "Tham o' Govan was at heart a ne'erdoweel." He, however, refilled our glasses as he spoke; and Scott, as he tasted his, said, "Weel, weel, Bailie, Ephraim was not so far wrong as to the matter of drink." A gay little Irish Squireen (a keener Protestant even than our "merchant and magistrate") did not seem to have discovered the Great Unknown until about this time, and now began to take a principal share in the conversation. To the bowl of Ephraim he had from the first done all justice. He broke at once into the heart of the debateable land; and after a few fierce tirades against Popery, asked the Highland Colonel, who had replaced the master of the steamer at the head of the table, to give *the glorious memory*. The prudent Colonel affected not to hear until this hint had been thrice repeated, watching carefully meanwhile the demeanour of a sufficiently mixed company. The general pushing in of glasses, and perhaps some freemasonry symptoms besides — (for we understood that he had often served in Ireland) — had satisfied him that all was right, and he rose and announced the Protestant Shibboleth with a voice that made the lockers and rafters ring again. Bailie * * * rose with grim alacrity to join in the cheers;

and then our Squireen proposed, in his own person, what, he said, always ought to be the second toast among good men and true. This was nothing else than *the heroic memory*, which, from our friend's preliminary speech, we understood to be the memory of *Oliver Cromwell*. Sir Walter winced more shrewdly than his Bailie had done about Ephraim's transgressions, but swallowed his punch, and stood up, glass in hand, like the rest, though an unfortunate fit of coughing prevented his taking part in their huzzas. This feature of Irish loyalism was new to the untravelled Scotch of the party. On a little reflection, however, we thought it not so unnatural. Our little Squireen boasted of being himself descended from a sergeant in Cromwell's army; and he added that "the best in Ireland" had similar pedigrees to be proud of. He took care, however, to inform us that his own great ancestor was a real *jontleman* all over, and behaved as such; "for," said he, "when Oliver gave him his order for the lands, he went to the widow, and tould her he would neither turn out her nor the best looking of her daughters; so get the best dinner you can, old lady," quoth he, "and parade the whole lot of them, and I'll pick." Which was done, it seems, accordingly; and probably no conquest ever wanted plenty of such alleviations.

When we got upon deck again after our carousal, we found it raining heavily, and the lady passengers in great misery; which state of things continued till we were within sight of Belfast. We got there about nine in the morning, and I find it set down that we paid four guineas for the conveyance of the carriage, and a guinea a-piece for ourselves; in 1837, I understand the charge for passengers is not more than half-a-crown a-head in the

cabin, and sixpence in the steerage — so rapidly has steam-navigation extended in the space of twelve years. Sir Walter told us he well remembered being on board of the first steamer that ever was launched in Britain, in 1812. For some time, that one awkward machine went back and forward between Glasgow and Greenock, and it would have looked like a cock-boat beside any one of the hundreds of magnificent steamships that now cover the Firth of Clyde. It is also written in my pocket-book, that the little Orange Squireen was particularly kind and serviceable at our landing — knocking about the swarm of porters that invaded the vessel on anchoring in a style quite new to us, with slang equally Irish — *e. g.* "Your fingers are all thumbs, I see — put that (portmanteau) in your teeth, you grampus," &c. &c.

The following is part of the first letter I wrote to my wife from Dublin: —

"Belfast is a thriving bustling place, surrounded with smart villas, and built much like a second-rate English town; yet there we saw the use of the imported rags forthwith. One man, apparently happy and gay, returning to his work (a mason seemingly) from breakfast, with pipe in mouth, had a coat of which I don't believe any three inches together were of the same colour or the same stuff — red, black, yellow, green — cloth, velveteen, corduroy, fustian — the complete image of a tattered coverlid originally made on purpose of particularly small patches — no shirt, and almost no breeches; — yet this is the best part of Ireland, and the best population. What shall we see in the South?

"Erin deserves undoubtedly the style of *Green Erin*. We passed through high and low country, rich and poor, but none that was not greener than Scotland ever saw. The husbandry to the north seemed rather careless than bad — I should say *slovenly*, for everything is cultivated, and the crops are fine,

though the appearance is quite spoiled by the bad, or oftener the *no* fences; and, above all, to unaccustomed eyes, by the human wretchedness everywhere visible even there. Your papa says, however, that he sees all over the North, marks of an improving country; that the new houses are all greatly better than the old, &c. He is no doubt right as to the towns, and even villages on the highway, but I can't imagine the *newest* hut of the peasantry to have been preceded by worse even in the days of Malachi with the collar of gold. They are of clay without chimneys, and without any opening for light, except the door and the smoke-hole in the roof. When there is a window, it seldom has even one pane of glass, and I take it the aperture is only a summer luxury, to be closed up with the ready trowel whenever the winter comes. The filth, darkness, and squalor of these dens and their inhabitants, are beyond imagination, even to us who have traversed so often the wildest of our own Highland glens; yet your father swears he has not yet seen one face decidedly careworn and unhappy; on the contrary, an universal good-humour and merriment, and, to us, every sort of civility from the poor people; as yet few beggars. An old man at Dunleer having got some pence from Anne while the carriage stopt, an older woman came forward to sell gooseberries, and we declining these, she added that we might as well give her an alms too then, for she was an old *struggler*. Anne thought she said *smuggler*, and dreamt of potheen, but she meant that she had done her best to resist the 'sea of troubles;' whereas her neighbour, the professed mendicant, had yielded to the stream too easily. The Unknown says he shall recollect the word, which deserves to be classical. We slept at Dundalk, a poor little town by the shore, but with a magnificent Justice-hall and jail — a public building superior, I think, to any in Edinburgh, in the midst of a place despicably dirty and miserable."

When we halted at Drogheda, a retired officer of dragoons, discovering that the party was Sir Walter's, sent in his card, with a polite offer to attend him over the

field of the battle of the Boyne, about two miles off, which of course was accepted; — Sir Walter rejoicing the veteran's heart by his vigorous recitation of the famous ballad (*The Crossing of the Water*), as we proceeded to the ground, and the eager and intelligent curiosity with which he received his explanations of it.

On Thursday the 14th we reached Dublin in time for dinner, and found young Walter and his bride established in one of those large and noble houses in St. Stephen's Green (the most extensive square in Europe), the founders of which little dreamt that they should ever be let at an easy rate as garrison lodgings. Never can I forget the fond joy and pride with which Sir Walter looked round him, as he sat for the first time at his son's table. I could not but recall Pindar's lines, in which, wishing to paint the gentlest rapture of felicity, he describes an old man with a foaming wine-cup in his hand at his child's wedding-feast.

That very evening arrived a deputation from the Royal Society of Dublin, inviting Sir Walter to a public dinner; and next morning he found on his breakfast-table a letter from the Provost of Trinity College (Dr. Kyle, now Bishop of Cork), announcing that the University desired to pay him the very high compliment of a degree of Doctor of Laws by *diploma*. The Archbishop of Dublin (the celebrated Dr. Magee), though surrounded with severe domestic afflictions at the time, was among the earliest of his visitors; another was the Attorney-General (now Lord Chancellor Plunkett); a third was the Commander of the Forces, Sir George Murray; and a fourth the Chief Remembrancer of Exchequer (the Right Honourable Anthony Blake), who was the bearer of a message from the Marquis Wellesley,

then Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, offering all sorts of facilities, and inviting him to dine next day at his Excellency's country residence, Malahide Castle. It would be endless to enumerate the distinguished persons who, morning after morning, crowded his *levee* in St. Stephen's Green. The courts of law were not then sitting, and most of the judges were out of town; but all the other great functionaries, and the leading noblemen and gentlemen of the city and its neighbourhood, of whatever sect or party, hastened to tender every conceivable homage and hospitality. But all this was less surprising to the companions of his journey (though, to say truth, we had, no more than himself, counted on such eager enthusiasm among any class of Irish society), than the demonstrations of respect which, after the first day or two, awaited him, wherever he moved, at the hands of the less elevated orders of the Dublin population. If his carriage was recognised at the door of any public establishment, the street was sure to be crowded before he came out again, so as to make his departure as slow as a procession. When he entered a street, the watch-word was passed down both sides like lightning, and the shopkeepers and their wives stood bowing and curtseying all the way down; while the mob and boys huzza'd as at the chariot wheels of a conqueror. I had certainly been most thoroughly unprepared for finding the common people of Dublin so alive to the claims of any non-military greatness. Sir Robert Peel says, that Sir Walter's reception on the High Street of Edinburgh, in August 1822, was the first thing that gave him a notion of "the electric shock of a nation's gratitude." I doubt if even that scene surpassed what I myself witnessed when he returned down Dame Street, after inspecting the Castle

of Dublin. Bailie * * * *, who had been in the crowd on that occasion, called afterwards in Stephen's Green to show Sir Walter some promised Return about his Glasgow Police, and observed to me, as he withdrew, that "*yon* was owre like worshipping the creature."

I may as well, perhaps, extract from a letter of the 16th, the contemporary note of one day's operations.

"Sir Humphry Davy is here on his way to fish in Connemara — he breakfasted at Walter's this morning; also Hartstonge, who was to show us the lions of St. Patrick's. Peveril was surprised to find the exterior of the cathedral so rudely worked, coarse, and almost shapeless — but the interior is imposing, and even grand. There are some curious old monuments of the Cork family, &c.; but one thinks of nothing but Swift there — the whole cathedral is merely his tomb. Your papa hung long over the famous inscription,* which is in gilt letters upon black marble; and seemed vexed there was not a ladder at hand that he might have got nearer the bust (apparently a very fine one), by Roubilliac, which is placed over it. This was given by the piety of his printer, Faulkener. According to this, Swift had a prodigious double chin; and Peveril remarked that the severity of the whole countenance is much increased by the absence of the wig, which, in the prints, conceals the height and gloom of the brow, the uncommon massiveness and breadth of the temple-bones, and the Herculean style in which the head fits in to the neck behind. Stella's epitaph is on the adjoining pillar — close by. Sir Walter seemed not to have thought of it before (or to have forgotten, if he had), but to judge merely from the wording that Swift himself wrote it. She is described as 'Mrs. Hester Johnson, better known to the world by the name of Stella, under which she is celebrated in the writings of Dr. Jonathan Swift, Dean

* The terrible inscription is "Hic depositum est corpus Jonathan Swift, S.T.P. &c., ubi sæva indignatio ulterius cor lacerare nequit."

of this cathedral.' 'This,' said Sir Walter, 'the Dean might say — any one else would have said more.' She died in 1727 — Swift in 1745. Just by the entrance to the transept, is his tablet in honour of the servant who behaved so well about the secret of the Drapier's Letters.—We then saw St. Sepulchre's Library, a monastic-looking place, very like one of the smaller college libraries in Oxford. Here they have the folio Clarendon, with Swift's marginal remarks, mostly in pencil, but still quite legible. 'Very savage as usual upon us poor Scots everywhere,' quoth the Unknown.— We then went into the Deanery (the one Swift inhabited has been pulled down), and had a most courteous and elegant reception from the Dean, the Honourable Dr. Ponsonby. He gave us a capital luncheon — the original full-length picture of *the* Dean over the sideboard. The print in the Edinburgh edition is very good — but the complexion is in the picture — black, robust, sanguine — a heavy-lidded, stern blue eye. It was interesting to see how completely the *genius loci* has kept his ground. Various little relics reverently hoarded as they should be. They said his memory was as fresh as ever among the common people about — they still sing his ballads, and had heard with great delight that Sir Walter wrote a grand book all about *the great Dane.* The

'Jolly lads of St. Patrick's, St. Keven's, Donore,'

mustered strong and stentorian at our exit. They would, like their great-grandfathers and mothers, have torn the Unknown to pieces, had he taken the other tack, and

'Insulted us all by insulting the Dean.' *

"We next saw the Bank, late Parliament House — the Dublin Society's Museum, where papa was enchanted with a perfect skeleton of the gigantic moose-deer, the horns fourteen feet from tip to tip, and high in proportion — and a long train of other fine places and queer things, all as per roadbook. Everywhere throughout this busy day — fine folks

* See Scott's *Swift* (Edit. 1814), vol. x. p. 537.

within doors and rabble without — a terrible rushing and crushing to see the Baronet; Lord Wellington could not have excited a better rumpus. But the theatre in the evening completed the thing. I never heard such a row. The players might as well have had no tongues. Beatrice (Miss Foote) twice left the stage; and at last Benedick (Abbot, who is the manager) came forward, cunning dog, and asked what was the cause of the tempest. A thousand voices shouted, *Sir Walter Scott;* and the worthy lion being thus bearded and poked, rose, after an hour's torture, and said, with such a kindness and grace of tone and manner, *these* words: — 'I am sure the Irish people — (a roar) — I am sure this respectable audience will not suppose that a stranger can be insensible to the kindness of their reception of him; and if I have been too long in saying this, I trust it will be attributed to the right cause — my unwillingness to take to myself honours so distinguished, and which I could not and cannot but feel to be unmerited.' I think these are the very words. The noise continued — a perfect cataract and thunder of roaring; but he would take no hints about going to the stage-box, and the evening closed decently enough. The theatre is very handsome — the dresses and scenery capital — the actors and actresses seemed (but, to be sure, this was scarcely a fair specimen) about as bad as in the days of Croker's Familiar Epistles."

On Monday the 18th, to give another extract —

"Young Mr. Maturin breakfasted, and Sir Walter asked a great deal about his late father and the present situation of the family, and promised to go and see the widow. When the young gentleman was gone, Hartstonge told us that Maturin used to compose with a wafer pasted on his forehead, which was the signal that if any of his family entered the *sanctum* they must not speak to him. 'He was never bred in a writer's *chaumer*,' quoth Peveril. Sir Walter observed that it seemed to be a piece of Protestantism in

Dublin to drop the saintly titles of the Catholic Church: they call St. Patrick's, Patrick's; and St. Stephen's Green has been Orangeized into Stephen's. He said you might trace the Puritans in the plain *Powles* (for St. Paul's) of the old English comedians. We then went to the Bank, where the Governor and Directors had begged him to let *themselves* show him everything in proper style; and he was forced to say, as he came out, 'These people treated me as if I was a Prince of the Blood.' I do believe that, just at this time, the Duke of York might be treated as well — better he could not be. From this to the College hard by. The Provost received Sir W. in a splendid drawing-room, and then carried him through the libraries, halls, &c., amidst a crowd of eager students. He received his diploma in due form, and there followed a superb *dejeuner* in the Provostry. Neither Oxford nor Cambridge could have done the whole thing in better style. Made acquaintance with Dr. Brinkley, Astronomer Royal, and Dr. Macdonnell, Professor of Greek, and all the rest of the leading Professors, who vied with each other in respect and devotion to the Unknown. — 19th. I forgot to say that there is one *true* paragraph in the papers. One of the College librarians yesterday told Sir W., fishingly, 'I have been so busy that I have not yet read *your* Redgauntlet.' He answered, very meekly, 'I have not happened to fall in with such a work, Doctor.'"

From Dublin we made an excursion of some days into the county Wicklow, halting for a night at the villa of the Surgeon-General, Mr. Crampton,* who struck Sir Walter as being more like Sir Humphry Davy than any man he had met, not in person only, but in the liveliness and range of his talk, and who kindly did the honours of Lough Breagh and the Dargle; and then for two or three at Old Connaught, Lord Plunkett's seat near Bray. Here there was a large

* Now Sir Philip Crampton, Baronet. — [1839.]

and brilliant party assembled; and from hence, under the guidance of the Attorney-General and his amiable family, we perambulated to all possible advantage the classical resorts of the Devil's Glyn, Rosanna, Kilruddery, and Glendalough, with its seven churches, and *St. Kevin's Bed* — the scene of the fate of Cathleen, celebrated in Moore's ballad —

> " By that lake whose gloomy shore
> Skylark never warbles o'er," &c.

"It is," says my letter, "a hole in the sheer surface of the rock, in which two or three people might sit. The difficulty of getting into this place has been exaggerated, as also the danger, for it would only be falling thirty or forty feet into very deep water. Yet I never was more pained than when your papa, in spite of all remonstrances, would make his way to it, crawling along the precipice. He succeeded and got in — the first lame man that ever tried it. After he was gone, Mr. Plunkett told the female guide he was a poet. Cathleen treated this with indignation, as a quiz of Mr. Attorney's. '*Poet!*' said she; 'the devil a bit of him — but an honourable gentleman: he gave me half-a-crown.'"

On the 1st of August we proceeded from Dublin to Edgeworthstown, the party being now reinforced by Captain and Mrs. Scott, and also by the delightful addition of the Surgeon-General, who had long been an intimate friend of the Edgeworth family, and equally gratified both the novelists by breaking the toils of his great practice to witness their meeting on his native soil. A happy meeting it was: we remained there for several days, making excursions to Loch Oel and other scenes of interest in Longford and the adjoining counties; the gentry everywhere exerting themselves with true Irish

zeal to signalize their affectionate pride in their illustrious countrywoman, and their appreciation of her guest; while her brother, Mr. Lovell Edgeworth, had his classical mansion filled every evening with a succession of distinguished friends, the *élite* of Ireland. Here, above all, we had the opportunity of seeing in what universal respect and comfort a gentleman's family may live in that country, and in far from its most favoured district, provided only they live there habitually, and do their duty as the friends and guardians of those among whom Providence has appointed their proper place. Here we found neither mud hovels nor naked peasantry, but snug cottages and smiling faces all about. Here there was a very large school in the village, of which masters and pupils were in a nearly equal proportion Protestants and Roman Catholics, — the Protestant squire himself making it a regular part of his daily business to visit the scene of their operations, and strengthen authority and enforce discipline by his personal superintendence. Here, too, we pleased ourselves with recognising some of the sweetest features in Goldsmith's picture of

"Sweet Auburn! loveliest village of the plain;"

and, in particular, we had "the playful children just let loose from school" in perfection. Mr. Edgeworth's paternal heart delighted in letting them make a play-ground of his lawn; and every evening after dinner we saw leap-frog going on with the highest spirit within fifty yards of the drawing-room windows, while fathers and mothers, and their aged parents also, were grouped about among the trees watching the sport. It is a curious enough coincidence that Oliver Goldsmith and Maria Edgeworth should both have derived their early love and knowledge

of Irish character and manners from the same identical district. He received part of his education at this very school of Edgeworthstown; and Pallasmore (the *locus cui nomen est Pallas* of Johnson's epitaph), the little hamlet where the author of the Vicar of Wakefield first saw the light, is still, as it was in his time, the property of the Edgeworths.

It may well be imagined with what lively interest Sir Walter surveyed the scenery with which so many of the proudest recollections of Ireland must ever be associated, and how curiously he studied the rural manners it presented to him, in the hope (not disappointed) of being able to trace some of his friend's bright creations to their first hints and germs. On the delight with which he contemplated her position in the midst of her own large and happy domestic circle, I need say still less. The reader is aware by this time how deeply he condemned and pitied the conduct and fate of those who, gifted with preëminent talents for the instruction and entertainment of their species at large, fancy themselves entitled to neglect those every-day duties and charities of life, from the mere shadowing of which in imaginary pictures the genius of poetry and romance has always reaped its highest and purest, perhaps its only true and immortal honours. In Maria he hailed a sister spirit — one who, at the summit of literary fame, took the same modest, just, and, let me add, *Christian* view of the relative importance of the feelings, the obligations, and the hopes in which we are all equally partakers, and those talents and accomplishments which may seem, to vain and short-sighted eyes, sufficient to constitute their possessors into an order and species apart from the rest of their kind. Such fantastic conceits found no shelter with either of

these powerful minds. I was then a young man, and I cannot forget how much I was struck at the time by some words that fell from one of them, when, in the course of a walk in the park at Edgeworthstown, I happened to use some phrase which conveyed (though not perhaps meant to do so) the impression that I suspected Poets and Novelists of being a good deal accustomed to look at life and the world only as materials for art. A soft and pensive shade came over Scott's face as he said — "I fear you have some very young ideas in your head: — are you not too apt to measure things by some reference to literature — to disbelieve that anybody can be worth much care who has no knowledge of that sort of thing, or taste for it? God help us! what a poor world this would be if that were the true doctrine! I have read books enough, and observed and conversed with enough of eminent and splendidly cultivated minds, too, in my time; but, I assure you, I have heard higher sentiments from the lips of poor *uneducated* men and women, when exerting the spirit of severe yet gentle heroism under difficulties and afflictions, or speaking their simple thoughts as to circumstances in the lot of friends and neighbours, than I ever yet met with out of the pages of the Bible. We shall never learn to feel and respect our real calling and destiny, unless we have taught ourselves to consider everything as moonshine, compared with the education of the heart." Maria did not listen to this without some water in her eyes — (her tears are always ready when any generous string is touched; — for, as Pope says, "the finest minds, like the finest metals, dissolve the easiest;") — but she brushed them gaily aside, and said, "You see how it is — Dean Swift said he had written his books in order that people might learn to treat him like

a great lord — Sir Walter writes his in order that he may be able to treat his people as a great lord ought to do."

Lest I should forget to mention it, I put down here a rebuke which, later in his life, Sir Walter once gave in my hearing to his daughter Anne. She happened to say of something, I forget what, that she could not abide it — it was *vulgar*. "My love," said her father, "you speak like a very young lady; do you know, after all, the meaning of this word *vulgar?* 'Tis only *common;* nothing that is common, except wickedness, can deserve to be spoken of in a tone of contempt; and when you have lived to my years, you will be disposed to agree with me in thanking God that nothing really worth having or caring about in this world is *uncommon*."

At Edgeworthstown he received the following letter from Mr. Canning: —

"*To Sir Walter Scott, Bart., &c. &c.*

"Combe Wood, July 24, 1825.

"My Dear Sir, — A pretty severe indisposition has prevented me from sooner acknowledging your kind letter; and now I fear that I shall not be able to accomplish my visit to Scotland this year. Although I shall be, for the last fortnight of August, at no great distance from the Borders, my time is so limited that I cannot reckon upon getting farther.

"I rejoice to see that my countrymen (for, though I was accidentally born in London, I consider myself an Irishman) have so well known the value of the honour which you are paying to them.

"By the way, if you landed at Liverpool on your return, could you find a better road to the north than through the Lake country? You would find me (from about the 10th of August) and Charles Ellis * at my friend Mr. Bolton's, on the

* Now Lord Seaford.

Banks of Windermere, where I can promise you as kind, though not so noisy a welcome, as that which you have just experienced; and where our friend the Professor (who is admiral of the Lake) would fit out all his flotilla, and fire as many of his guns as are not painted ones, in honour of your arrival. — Yours, my dear sir, very sincerely,

"GEO. CANNING."

This invitation was not to be resisted; and the following letter announced a change of the original route: —

"*To John B. S. Morritt, Esq., Rokeby Park.*

"Edgeworthstown, Aug. 3, 1825.

"Your kind letter, my dear Morritt, finds me sweltering under the hottest weather I ever experienced, for the sake of seeing sights — of itself, you know, the most feverish occupation in the world. Luckily we are free of Dublin, and there is nothing around us but green fields and fine trees, 'barring the high roads,' which make those who tread on them the most complete *pie-poudreux* ever seen; that is, if the old definition of *pie-poudres* be authentic, and if not, you may seek another dusty simile for yourself — it cannot exceed the reality. I have with me Lockhart and Anne, Walter and his *cara sposa*, for all whom the hospitality of Edgeworthstown has found ample space and verge enough. Indeed it is impossible to conceive the extent of this virtue in all classes; I don't think even our Scottish hospitality can match that of Ireland. Everything seems to give way to the desire to accommodate a stranger; and I really believe the story of the Irish harper, who condemned his harp to the flames for want of fire-wood to cook a guest's supper. Their personal kindness to me has been so great, that were it not from the chilling recollection that novelty is easily substituted for merit, I should think, like the booby in Steele's play, that I had been *kept back*, and that there was something more about me than I had ever been led to suspect. As I am LL.D. of Trinity College, and am qualified

as a Catholic seer, by having mounted up into the bed of Saint Kevin, at the celebrated seven churches of Glendalough, I am entitled to prescribe, *ex cathedrâ*, for all the diseases of Ireland, as being free both of the Catholic and Protestant parties. But the truth is, that Pat, while the doctors were consulting, has been gradually and securely recovering of himself. He is very loath to admit this, indeed; there being a strain of hypochondria in his complaints, which will not permit him to believe he's getting better. Nay, he gets even angry when a physician, more blunt than polite, continues to assure him that he is better than he supposes himself, and that much of his present distress consists, partly of the recollection of former indisposition, partly of the severe practice of modern empirics.

"In sober sadness, to talk of the misery of Ireland at this time, is to speak of the illness of a *malade imaginaire*. *Well* she is not, but she is rapidly becoming so. There are all the outward and visible tokens of convalescence. Everything is mending; the houses that arise are better a hundred-fold than the cabins which are falling; the peasants of the younger class are dressed a great deal better than with the rags which clothe the persons of the more ancient Teagues, which realize the wardrobe of Jenny Sutton, of whom Morris sweetly sings,

> 'One single pin at night let loose
> The robes which veiled her beauty.'

I am sure I have seen with apprehension a single button perform the same feat, and when this mad scarecrow hath girded up his loins to run hastily by the side of the chaise, I have feared it would give way, and that there, as King Lear's fool says, we should be all shamed. But this, which seems once to have generally been the attire of the fair of the Green Isle, probably since the time of King Malachi and the collar of gold, is now fast disappearing, and the habit of the more youthful Pats and Patesses is decent and comely. *Here* they all look well coloured, and well fed, and well contented. And as I see in most places great exertions making to reclaim bogs

upon a large scale, and generally to improve ground, I must needs hold that they are in constant employment.

"With all this, there is much that remains to be amended, and which time and increase of capital only can amend. The price of labour is far too low, and this naturally reduces the labouring poor beyond their just level in society. The behaviour of the gentry in general to the labourers is systematically harsh, and this arrogance is received with a servile deference which argues anything excepting affection. This, however, is also in the course of amending. I have heard a great deal of the far-famed Catholic Question from both sides, and I think I see its bearings better than I did; but these are for your ear when we meet — as meet we shall — if no accident prevent it. I return *via* Holyhead, as I wish to show Anne something of England, and you may believe that we shall take Rokeby in our way. To-morrow I go to Killarney, which will occupy most part of the week. About Saturday I shall be back at Dublin to take leave of friends; and then for England, ho! I will, avoiding London, seek a pleasant route to Rokeby. Fate will only allow us to rest there for a day or two, because I have some desire to see Canning, who is to be on the Lakes about that time. *Et finis*,— my leave will be exhausted. Anne and Lockhart send kindest compliments to you and the ladies. I am truly rejoiced that Mrs. John Morritt is better. Indeed, I had learned that agreeable intelligence from Lady Louisa Stuart. I found Walter and his wife living happily and rationally, affectionately and prudently. There is great good sense and quietness about all Jane's domestic arrangements, and she plays the leaguer's lady very prettily. — I will write again when I reach Britain, and remain ever yours, WALTER SCOTT."

Miss Edgeworth, her sister Harriet, and her brother William, were easily persuaded to join our party for the rest of our Irish travels. We had lingered a week at Edgeworthstown, and were now anxious to make the best of our way towards the Lakes of Killarney; but posting

was not to be very rapidly accomplished in those regions by so large a company as had now collected — and we were more agreeably delayed by the hospitalities of Miss Edgeworth's old friends, and several of Sir Walter's new ones, at various mansions on our line of route — of which I must note especially Judge Moore's, at Lamberton, near Maryborough, because Sir Walter pronounced its beneficence to be even beyond the usual Irish scale; for, on reaching our next halting place, which was an indifferent country inn, we discovered that we need be in no alarm as to our dinner at all events, the Judge's people having privately packed up in one of the carriages, ere we started in the morning, a pickled salmon, a most lordly venison pasty, and half-a-dozen bottles of champaign. But most of these houses seemed, like the Judge's, to have been constructed on the principle of the Peri Banou's tent. They seemed all to have room not only for the lion and lioness, and their respective tails, but for all in the neighbourhood who could be held worthy to inspect them at feeding-time.

It was a succession of festive gaiety wherever we halted; and in the course of our movements we saw many castles, churches, and ruins of all sorts — with more than enough of mountain, wood, lake, and river, to have made any similar progress in any other part of Europe, truly delightful in all respects. But those of the party to whom the South of Ireland was new, had almost continually before them spectacles of abject misery, which robbed these things of more than half their charm. Sir Walter, indeed, with the habitual hopefulness of his temper, persisted that what he saw even in Kerry was better than what books had taught him to expect; and insured, therefore, that improvement, however slow, was going on.

But, ever and anon, as we moved deeper into the country, there was a melancholy in his countenance, and, despite himself, in the tone of his voice, which I for one could not mistake. The constant passings and repassings of bands of mounted policemen, armed to the teeth, and having quite the air of highly disciplined soldiers on sharp service; — the rueful squalid poverty that crawled by every way-side, and blocked up every village where we had to change horses, with exhibitions of human suffering and degradation, such as it had never entered into our heads to conceive; — and, above all, the contrast between these naked clamorous beggars, who seemed to spring out of the ground at every turn like swarms of vermin, and the boundless luxury and merriment surrounding the thinly scattered magnates who condescended to inhabit their ancestral seats, would have been sufficient to poison those landscapes, had nature dressed them out in the verdure of Arcadia, and art embellished them with all the temples and palaces of Old Rome and Athens. It is painful enough even to remember such things; but twelve years can have had but a trifling change in the appearance of a country which, so richly endowed by Providence with every element of wealth and happiness, could, at so advanced a period of European civilization, sicken the heart of the stranger by such wide-spread manifestations of the wanton and reckless profligacy of human mismanagement, the withering curse of feuds and factions, and the tyrannous selfishness of absenteeism; and I fear it is not likely that any contemporary critic will venture to call my melancholy picture overcharged. A few blessed exceptions — such an aspect of ease and decency, for example, as we met everywhere on the vast domain of the Duke of Devonshire — served only to

make the sad reality of the rule more flagrant and appalling. Taking his bedroom candle, one night on the Duke's estate, Sir Walter summed up the strain of his discourse by a line of Shakspeare's —

"Sweet mercy is nobility's true badge."

There were, however, abundance of ludicrous incidents to break this gloom; and no traveller ever tasted either the humours or the blunders of Paddy more heartily than did Sir Walter. I find recorded in one letter a very merry morning at Limerick, where, amidst the ringing of all the bells, in honour of the advent, there was ushered in a brother-poet, who must needs pay his personal respects to the author of Marmion. He was a scarecrow figure — attired much in the fashion of the *strugglers* — by name O'Kelly; and he had produced on the spur of the occasion this modest parody of Dryden's famous epigram: —

"Three poets, of three different nations born,
The United Kingdom in this age adorn;
Byron of England, Scott of Scotia's blood,
And Erin's pride — O'Kelly, great and good."

Sir Walter's five shillings were at once forthcoming; and the bard, in order that Miss Edgeworth might display equal generosity, pointed out, in a little volume of his works (for which, moreover, we had all to subscribe), this pregnant couplet —

"Scott, Morgan, Edgeworth, Byron, prop of Greece,
Are characters whose fame not soon will cease."

We were still more amused (though there was real misery in the case) with what befel on our approach to a certain pretty seat, in a different county, where there was a collection of pictures and curiosities not

usually shown to travellers. A gentleman, whom we had met in Dublin, had been accompanying us part of the day's journey, and volunteered, being acquainted with the owner, to procure us easy admission. At the entrance of the domain, to which we proceeded under his wing, we were startled by the dolorous apparition of two undertaker's men, in voluminous black scarfs, though there was little or nothing of black about the rest of their habiliments, who sat upon the highway before the gate, with a whisky-bottle on a deal-table between them. They informed us that the master of the house had died the day before, and that they were to keep watch and ward in this style until the funeral, inviting all Christian passengers to drink a glass to his repose. Our cicerone left his card for the widow — having previously, no doubt, written on it the names of his two lions. Shortly after we regained our post-house, he received a polite answer from the lady. To the best of my memory, it was in these terms: —

"Mrs. —— presents her kind compliments to Mr. ——, and much regrets that she cannot show the pictures to-day, as Major —— died yesterday evening by apoplexy; which Mrs. —— the more regrets, as it will prevent her having the honour to see Sir Walter Scott and Miss Edgeworth."

Sir Walter said it reminded him of a woman in Fife, who, summing up the misfortunes of a black year in her history, said — "Let me see, sirs; first we lost our wee callant — and then Jenny — and then the gudeman himsel died — and then the *coo* died too, poor hizzey; but, to be sure, *her* hide brought me fifteen shillings."

At one county gentleman's table where we dined,

though two grand full-length daubs of William and Mary adorned the walls of the room, there was a mixed company — about as many Catholics as Protestants, all apparently on cordial terms, and pledging each other lustily in bumpers of capital claret. About an hour after dinner, however, punch was called for; tumblers and jugs of hot water appeared, and with them two magnums of whisky — the one bearing on its label KING'S, the other QUEEN'S. We did not at first understand these inscriptions; but it was explained, *sotto voce*, that the King's had paid the duty, the Queen's was of contraband origin; and, in the choice of liquors, we detected a new shibboleth of party. The jolly Protestants to a man stuck to the King's bottle — the equally radiant Papists paid their duty to the Queen's.

Since I have alluded at all to the then grand dispute, I may mention, that, after our tour was concluded, we considered with some wonder that, having partaken liberally of Catholic hospitality, and encountered almost every other class of society, we had not sat at meat with one specimen of the Romish priesthood; whereas, even at Popish tables, we had met dignitaries of the Established Church. This circumstance we set down at the time as amounting pretty nearly to a proof that there were few gentlemen in that order; but we afterwards were willing to suspect that a prejudice of their own had been the source of it. The only incivility, which Sir Walter Scott ultimately discovered himself to have encountered — (for his friends did not allow him to hear of it at the time) — in the course of his Irish peregrination, was the refusal of a Roman Catholic gentleman, named O'Connell, who kept stag-hounds near Killarney, to allow of a hunt on the upper lake, the

day he visited that beautiful scenery. This he did, as we were told, because he considered it as a notorious fact, that Sir Walter Scott was an enemy to the Roman Catholic claims for admission to seats in Parliament. He was entirely mistaken, however; for, though no man disapproved of Romanism as a system of faith and practice more sincerely than Sir Walter always did, he had long before this period formed the opinion, that no good could come of farther resistance to the claim in question. He on all occasions expressed manfully his belief, that the best thing for Ireland would have been never to relax the strictly *political* enactments of the penal laws, however harsh these might appear. Had they been kept in vigour for another half century, it was his conviction that Popery would have been all but extinguished in Ireland. But he thought that, after admitting Romanists to the elective franchise, it was a vain notion that they could be permanently or advantageously debarred from using that franchise in favour of those of their own persuasion. The greater part of the charming society into which he fell while in Ireland, entertained views and sentiments very likely to confirm these impressions; and it struck me that considerable pains were taken to enforce them. It was felt, probably, that the crisis of decision drew near; and there might be a natural anxiety to secure the suffrage of the great writer of the time. The polished amenity of the Lord-Lieutenant set off his commanding range of thought and dexterous exposition of facts to the most captivating advantage. "The Marquis's talk," says Scott, in a letter of the following year, "gave me the notion of the kind of statesmanship that one might have expected in a Roman emperor, accustomed to keep the whole world

in his view, and to divide his hours between ministers like Mecænas and wits like Horace." The acute logic and brilliant eloquence of Lord Plunkett he ever afterwards talked of with high admiration; nor had he, he said, encountered in society any combination of qualities more remarkable than the deep sagacity and the broad rich humour of Mr. Blake. In Plunkett, Blake, and Crampton, he considered himself as having gained three real friends by this expedition; and I think I may venture to say, that the feeling on their side was warmly reciprocal.

If he had been made aware at the time of the discourtesy of the Romish staghunter at Killarney, he might have been consoled by a letter which reached him that same week from a less bigoted member of the same church — the great poet of Ireland — whom he had never chanced to meet in society but once, and that at an early period of life, shortly after the first publication of the Lay of the Last Minstrel.

"*To Sir Walter Scott, Bart., &c. &c.*

"Sloperton Cottage, Devizes, July 24, 1825.

"My Dear Sir Walter, — I wish most heartily that I had been in my own green land to welcome you. It delights me, however, to see (what I could not have doubted) that the warm hearts of my countrymen have shown that they know how to value you. How I envy those who will have the glory of showing you and Killarney to each other! No two of nature's productions, I *will* say, were ever more worthy of meeting. If the Kenmares should be your ciceroni, pray tell them what I say of their Paradise, with my best regards and greetings. I received your kind message, through Newton,* last

* The late amiable and elegant artist, Gilbert Stewart Newton, R. A., had spent part of the autumn of 1824 at Chiefswood.

year, that 'if I did not come and see you, before you died, you would appear to me afterwards.' Be assured that, as I am all for living apparitions, I shall take care and have the start of you, and would have done it this very year, I rather think, only for your Irish movements.

"Present my best regards to your son-in-law, and believe me, my dear Sir Walter (though we have met, I am sorry to say, but once in our lives), — yours cordially and sincerely,

"THOMAS MOORE."

Scott's answer was —

"*To Thomas Moore, Esq.*

"August 5, Somerton, near Templeton (I think.)

"My Dear Sir, — If anything could have added to the pleasure I must necessarily feel at the warm reception which the Irish nation have honoured me with, or if anything could abate my own sense that I am noways worth the coil that has been made about me, it must be the assurance that you partake and approve of the feelings of your kind-hearted countryfolks.

"In Ireland I have met with everything that was kind, and have seen much which is never to be forgotten. What I have seen has, in general, given me great pleasure; for it appears to me that the adverse circumstances which have so long withered the prosperity of this rich and powerful country are losing their force, and that a gradual but steady spirit of progressive improvement is effectually, though tacitly, counteracting their bad effects. The next twenty-five years will probably be the most important in their results that Ireland ever knew. So prophesies a sharp-sighted Sennachie from the land of mist and snow, aware that, though his opinion may be unfounded, he cannot please your ear better than by presaging the prosperity of Ireland.

"And so, to descend from such high matters, I hope you will consider me as having left my card for you by this visit, although I have not been happy enough to find you at home.

You are bound by the ordinary forms of society to return the call, and come to see Scotland. Bring wife and bairns. We have plenty of room, and plenty of oatmeal, and *entre nous*, a bottle or two of good claret, to which I think you have as little objection as I have. We will talk of poor Byron, who was dear to us both, and regret that such a rose should have fallen from the chaplet of his country so untimely. I very often think of him almost with tears. Surely you, who have the means, should do something for his literary life at least. You might easily avoid tearing open old wounds. Then, returning to our proposed meeting, you know folks call me a Jacobite, and you a Jacobin; so it is quite clear that we agree to a T. Having uttered this vile pun, which is only pardonable because the subject of politics deserves no better, it is high time to conclude.

"I return through England, yet, I am afraid, with little chance of seeing you, which I should wish to do, were it but for half an hour. I have come thus far on my way to Killarney, where Hallam is lying with a broken leg. So much for middle-aged gentlemen climbing precipices. I, who have been regularly inducted into the bed of St. Kevin at the Seven Churches, trust I shall bear charmed limbs upon this occasion. — I am very much, dear sir, your obliged and faithful

"WALTER SCOTT."

Having crossed the hills from Killarney to Cork, where a repetition of the Dublin reception — corporation honours, deputations of the literary and scientific societies, and so forth — awaited him, he gave a couple of days to the hospitality of this flourishing town, and the beautiful scenery of the Lee; not forgetting an excursion to the groves of Blarney, among whose shades we had a right mirthful pic-nic. Sir Walter scrambled up to the top of the castle, and kissed, with due faith and devotion, the famous *Blarney stone*, one salute of which is said to eman-

cipate the pilgrim from all future visitations of *mauvaise honte:*

> "The stone this is, whoever kisses,
> He never misses to grow eloquent —
> 'Tis he may clamber to a lady's chamber,
> Or be a member of Parliament."

But the shamefacedness of our young female friends was not exposed to an inspection of the works of art, celebrated by the poetical Dean of Cork as the prime ornaments of Lady Jefferies's "station" —

> "The statues growing that noble place in,
> Of heathen goddesses most rare —
> Homer, Venus, and Nebuchadnezzar,
> All standing naked in the open air."

These had disappeared, and the castle and all its appurtenances were in a state of woful dilapidation and neglect.

From Cork we proceeded to Dublin by Fermoy, Lismore, Cashel, Kilkenny, and Holycross — at all of which places we were bountifully entertained, and assiduously ciceroned — to our old quarters in St. Stephen's Green; and after a morning or two spent in taking leave of many kind faces that he was never to see again, Sir Walter and his original fellow-travellers started for Holyhead on the 18th of August. Our progress through North Wales produced nothing worth recording, except perhaps the feeling of delight which everything in the aspect of the common people, their dress, their houses, their gardens, and their husbandry, could not fail to call up in persons who had just been seeing Ireland for the first time; and a short visit (which was, indeed, the only one he made) to the far-famed "ladies" of Llangollen. They had received some hint that Sir Walter meant to pass their

way; and on stopping at the inn, he received an invitation so pressing, to add one more to the long list of the illustrious visitors of their retreat, that it was impossible for him not to comply. We had read histories and descriptions enough of these romantic spinsters, and were prepared to be well amused; but the reality surpassed all expectation.

An extract from a gossiping letter of the following week will perhaps be sufficient for Llangollen.

"Elleray, August 24.

* * * "We slept on Wednesday evening at Capel Carig, which Sir W. supposes to mean the Chapel of the Crags; a pretty little inn in a most picturesque situation certainly, and as to the matter of toasted cheese, quite exquisite. Next day we advanced through, I verily believe, the most perfect gem of a country eye ever saw, having almost all the wildness of Highland backgrounds, and all the loveliness of rich English landscape nearer us, and streams like the purest and most babbling of our own. At Llangollen your papa was waylaid by the celebrated 'Ladies' — viz. Lady Eleanor Butler and the Honourable Miss Ponsonby, who having been one or both crossed in love, forswore all dreams of matrimony in the heyday of youth, beauty, and fashion, and selected this charming spot for the repose of their now time-honoured virginity. It was many a day, however, before they could get implicit credit for being the innocent friends they really were, among the people of the neighbourhood; for their elopement from Ireland had been performed under suspicious circumstances; and as Lady Eleanor arrived here in her natural aspect of a pretty girl, while Miss Ponsonby had condescended to accompany her in the garb of a smart footman in buckskin breeches, years and years elapsed ere full justice was done to the character of their romance.* We proceeded up the hill, and found everything

* It is, I suppose, needless to say, that the editor is far from vouch-

about them and their habitation odd and extravagant beyond report. Imagine two women, one apparently seventy, the other sixty-five, dressed in heavy blue riding-habits, enormous shoes, and men's hats, with their petticoats so tucked up, that at the first glance of them, fussing and tottering about their porch in the agony of expectation, we took them for a couple of hazy or crazy old sailors. On nearer inspection they both wear a world of brooches, rings, &c., and Lady Eleanor positively *orders* — several stars and crosses, and a red ribbon, exactly like a K.C.B. To crown all, they have crop heads, shaggy, rough, bushy, and as white as snow, the one with age alone, the other assisted by a sprinkling of powder. The elder lady is almost blind, and every way much decayed; the other, the ci-devant groom, in good preservation. But who could paint the prints, the dogs, the cats, the miniatures, the cram of cabinets, clocks, glass-cases, books, bijouterie, dragon-china, nodding mandarins, and whirligigs of every shape and hue — the whole house outside and in (for we must see everything to the dressing-closets), *covered* with carved oak, very rich and fine some of it — and the illustrated copies of Sir W.'s poems, and the joking simpering compliments about Waverley, and the anxiety to know who MacIvor really was, and the absolute devouring of the poor Unknown, who had to carry off, besides all the rest, one small bit of literal *butter* dug up in a Milesian stone jar lately from the bottom of some Irish bog. Great romance (*i. e.* absurd innocence of character) one must have looked for; but it was confounding to find this mixed up with such eager curiosity, and enormous knowledge of the tattle and scandal of the world they had so long left. Their tables were piled with newspapers from every corner of the kingdom, and they seemed to have the deaths and marriages of the antipodes at their fingers' ends. Their albums and autographs, from Louis XVIII. and George IV., down to magazine poets and quack-doctors, are a museum. I shall

ing for the accuracy of these details. The letter in the text gives the gossip as it was heard at the time.

never see the spirit of blue-stockingism again in such perfect incarnation. Peveril won't get over their final kissing match for a week. Yet it is too bad to laugh at these good old girls; they have long been the guardian angels of the village, and are worshipped by man, woman, and child about them."

This letter was written on the banks of Windermere, where we were received with the warmth of old friendship by Mr. Wilson, and one whose grace and gentle goodness could have found no lovelier or fitter home than Elleray, except where she is now.

Mr. Bolton's seat, to which Canning had invited Scott, is situated a couple of miles lower down on the same Lake; and thither Mr. Wilson conducted him next day. A large company had been assembled there in honour of the Minister — it included already Mr. Wordsworth. It has not, I suppose, often happened to a plain English merchant, wholly the architect of his own fortunes, to entertain at one time a party embracing so many illustrious names. He was proud of his guests; they respected him, and honoured and loved each other; and it would have been difficult to say which star in the constellation shone with the brightest or the softest light. There was "high discourse," intermingled with as gay flashings of courtly wit as ever Canning displayed; and a plentiful allowance, on all sides, of those airy transient pleasantries, in which the fancy of poets, however wise and grave, delights to run riot when they are sure not to be misunderstood. There were beautiful and accomplished women to adorn and enjoy this circle. The weather was as Elysian as the scenery. There were brilliant cavalcades through the woods in the mornings, and delicious boatings on the Lake by moonlight; and the last day "the Admiral of the Lake" presided over one of the

most splendid regattas that ever enlivened Windermere. Perhaps there were not fewer than fifty barges following in the Professor's radiant procession, when it paused at the point of Storrs to admit into the place of honour the vessel that carried kind and happy Mr. Bolton and his guests. The bards of the Lakes led the cheers that hailed Scott and Canning; and music and sunshine, flags, streamers, and gay dresses, the merry hum of voices, and the rapid splashing of innumerable oars, made up a dazzling mixture of sensations as the flotilla wound its way among the richly-foliaged islands, and along bays and promontories peopled with enthusiastic spectators.

On at last quitting the festive circle of Storrs, we visited the family of the late Bishop Watson at Calgarth, and Mr. Wordsworth at his charming retreat of Mount Rydal. He accompanied us to Keswick, where we saw Mr. Southey in his unrivalled library. Mr. Wordsworth and his daughter then turned with us, and passing over Kirkstone to Ulswater, conducted us first to his friend Mr. Marshall's elegant villa, near Lyulph's Tower, and on the next day to the noble castle of his lifelong friend and patron Lord Lonsdale. The Earl and Countess had their halls filled with another splendid circle of distinguished persons, who, like them, lavished all possible attentions and demonstrations of respect upon Sir Walter. He remained a couple of days, and perambulated, under Wordsworth's guidance, the superb terraces and groves of the "fair domain" which that poet has connected with the noblest monument of his genius. But the temptations of Storrs and Lowther had cost more time than had been calculated upon, and the promised visit to Rokeby was unwillingly abandoned. Sir

Walter reached Abbotsford again on the 1st of September, and said truly that "his tour had been one ovation."

I add two letters on the subject of this Irish expedition: —

"*To J. B. S. Morritt, Esq., Rokeby Park, Greta Bridge.*

"Abbotsford, Sept. 2, 1825.

"Your letter, my dear Morritt, gave me most sincere pleasure on your account, and also on my own, as it reconciled me to myself for my stupidity in misdirecting my letters to Charlotte and you from Wales. I was sincerely vexed when I found out my *bevue*, but am now well pleased that it happened, since we might otherwise have arrived at Rokeby at a time when we must necessarily have been a little in the way. I wish you joy most sincerely of your nephew's settling in life, in a manner so agreeably to your wishes and views. *Bella gerant alii* — he will have seen enough of the world abroad to qualify him fully to estimate and discharge the duties of an English country-gentleman; and with your example before him, and your advice to resort to, he cannot, with the talents he possesses, fail to fill honourably that most honourable and important rank in society. You will, probably, in due time, think of Parliament for him, where there is a fine sphere for young men of talents at present, all the old political post-horses being, as Sir Pertinax says, dry-foundered.

"I was extremely sorry to find Canning at Windermere looking poorly; but, in a ride, the old man seemed to come alive again. I fear he works himself too hard, under the great error of trying to do too much with his own hand, and to see everything with his own eyes, whereas the greatest general and the first statesman must, in many cases, be content to use the eyes and fingers of others, and hold themselves contented with the exercise of the greatest care in the choice of implements. His is a valuable life to us just now. — I passed a couple of days at Lowther, to make up in some degree to Anne for her disappointment in not getting to Rokeby. I

was seduced there by Lady Frederick Bentinck, whom I had long known as a very agreeable person, and who was very kind to Anne. This wore out my proposed leisure; and from Lowther we reached Abbotsford in one day, and now doth the old *bore* feed in the old frank.* I had the great pleasure of leaving Walter and his little wife well, happy, and, as they seem perfectly to understand each other, likely to continue so. His ardour for military affairs continues unabated, and his great scene of activity is the *fifteen acres* — so the Irish denominate the exercising ground, consisting of about fifty acres in the Phœnix Park, which induced an attorney, writing a challenge to a brother of the trade, to name, as a place of meeting, the *fifteen acres*, adding, with professional accuracy, 'be they more or less.' Here, about 3000 men, the garrison of Dublin, are to be seen exercising, ever and anon, in order that Pat may be aware how some 2400 muskets, assisted by the discharge of twenty field-pieces, and the tramp of 500 or 600 horse, sound in comparison to the thunder of Mr. O'Connell.

"All this travelling and wooing is like to prevent our meeting this season. I hope to make up for it the next. Lady Scott, Anne, and Sophia, join Lockhart and me in best wishes to the happy two who are to be soon one. My best respects attend the Miss Morritts, — and I ever am, most truly yours,

"WALTER SCOTT."

"*To Miss Joanna Baillie, Hampstead.*

"Abbotsford, October 12, 1825.

"It did not require your kind letter of undeserved remembrance, my dear friend, to remind me that I had been guilty of very criminal negligence in our epistolary correspondence. How this has come to pass I really do not know; but it arises out of any source but that of ingratitude to my friends, or thoughtless forgetfulness of my duty to them. On the contrary, I think always most of them to whom I do owe letters,

* *2d King Henry IV.* Act II. Scene 3.

for when my conscience is satisfied on that subject, their perturbed spirits remain at rest, or at least do not haunt me as the injured spirits do the surviving murderers.

"I well intended to have written from Ireland, but, alas! hell, as some stern old divine says, is paved with good intentions. There was such a whirl of visiting, and laking, and boating, and wondering, and shouting, and laughing, and carousing; so much to be seen and so little time to see it; so much to be heard, and only two ears to listen to twenty voices, that, upon the whole, I grew desperate, and gave up all thoughts of doing what was right and proper upon post-days — and so all my epistolary good intentions are gone to Macadamize, I suppose, 'the burning marle' of the infernal regions. I have not the pen of our friend Maria Edgeworth, who writes all the while she laughs, talks, eats, and drinks, and I believe, though I do not pretend to be so far in the secret, all the time she sleeps too. She has good luck in having a pen which walks at once so unweariedly and so well. I do not, however, quite like her last book on Education, considered as a general work. She should have limited the title to Education in Natural Philosophy, or some such term, for there is no great use in teaching children in general to roof houses or build bridges, which, after all, a carpenter or a mason does a great deal better at 2s. 6d. per day. In a waste country, like some parts of America, it may do very well, or perhaps for a sailor or a traveller, certainly for a civil engineer. But in the ordinary professions of the better-informed orders I have always observed that a small taste for mechanics tends to encouraging a sort of trifling self-conceit, founded on knowing that which is not worth being known by one who has other matters to employ his mind on, and, in short, forms a trumpery gimcrack kind of a character, who is a mechanic among gentlemen, and most probably a gentleman among mechanics. You must understand I mean only to challenge the system as making mechanics too much and too general a subject of education, and converting scholars into makers of toys. Men like Watt, or whose genius tends strongly to in-

vent and execute those wonderful combinations which extend in such an incalculable degree the human force and command over the physical world, do not come within ordinary rules; but your ordinary Harry should be kept to his grammar, and your Lucy of most common occurrence will be best employed on her sampler, instead of wasting wood, and cutting their fingers, which I am convinced they did, though their historian says nothing of it.

"Well, but I did not mean to say anything about Harry and Lucy, whose dialogues are very interesting after all, but about Ireland, which I could prophesy for as well as if I were Thomas the Rhymer. Her natural gifts are so great, that, despite all the disadvantages which have hitherto retarded her progress, she will, I believe, be queen of the trefoil of kingdoms. I never saw a richer country, or, to speak my mind, a finer people; the worst of them is the bitter and envenomed dislike which they have to each other. Their factions have been so long envenomed, and they have such narrow ground to do their battle in, that they are like people fighting with daggers in a hogshead. This, however, is getting better, for as the government temporizes between the parties, and does not throw, as formerly, its whole weight into the Protestant scale, there is more appearance of things settling into concord and good order. The Protestants of the old school, the determined Orangemen, are a very fine race, but dangerous for the quiet of a country; they reminded me of the Spaniard in Mexico, and seemed still to walk among the Catholics with all the pride of the conquerors of the Boyne and the captors of Limerick. Their own belief is completely fixed, that there are enough of men in Down and Antrim to conquer all Ireland again; and when one considers the habitual authority they have exercised, their energetic and military character, and the singular way in which they are banded and united together, they may be right enough for what I know, for they have all one mind and one way of pursuing it. But the Catholic is holding up his head now in a different way from what they did in former days, though still with a touch of the sav-

age about them. It is, after all, a helpless sort of superstition, which with its saints' days, and the influence of its ignorant bigoted priesthood, destroys ambition and industrious exertion. It is rare to see the Catholic rise above the line he is born in. The Protestant part of the country is as highly improved as many parts of England. Education is much more frequent in Ireland than England. In Kerry, one of the wildest counties, you find peasants who speak Latin. It is not the art of reading, however, but the use which is made of it, that is to be considered. It is much to be wished that the priests themselves were better educated, — but the College at Maynooth has been a failure. The students, all men of the lower orders, are educated there in all the bigotry of the Catholic religion, unmitigated by any of the knowledge of the world which they used to acquire in France, Italy, or Spain, from which they returned very often highly accomplished and companionable men. I do not believe either party care a bit for what is called Emancipation, only that the Catholics desire it because the Protestants are not willing they should have it, and the Protestants desire to withhold it, because the want of it mortifies the Catholic. The best-informed Catholics said it had no interest for the common people, whose distresses had nothing to do with political Emancipation, but that they, the higher order, were interested in it as a point of honour, the withholding of which prevented their throwing their strength into the hands of Government. On the whole, I think Government have given the Catholics so much, that withholding this is just giving them something to grumble about, without its operating to diminish, in a single instance, the extent of Popery. — Then we had beautiful lakes, 'those vast inland seas,' as Spenser terms them, and hills which they call mountains, and dargles and dingles, and most superb ruins of castles and abbeys, and live nuns in strict retreat, not permitted to speak, but who read their breviaries with one eye, and looked at their visiters with the other. Then we had Miss Edgeworth, and the kind-natured clever Harriet, who moved, and thought, and acted for everybody's comfort rather than her own; we

had Lockhart to say clever things — and Walter, with his whiskers, to overawe obstinate postilions and impudent beggars — and Jane to bless herself that the folks had neither houses, clothes, nor furniture — and Anne to make fun from morning to night —

'And merry folks were we.'

"John Richardson has been looking at a wild domain within five miles of us, and left us in the earnest determination to buy it, having caught a basket of trouts in the space of two hours in the stream he is to call his own. It is a good purchase, I think; he has promised to see me again, and carry you up a bottle of whisky, which, if you will but take enough of, will operate as a peace-offering should, and make you forget all my epistolary failures. I beg kind respects to dear Mrs. Agnes and to Mrs. Baillie. Lady Scott and Anne send best respects. — I have but room to say that I am always yours,

"WALTER SCOTT."

CHAPTER LXIV.

Life of Napoleon in progress — Visits of Mr. Moore, Mrs. Coutts, &c. — Commercial Mania and impending Difficulties.

1825.

WITHOUT an hour's delay Sir Walter resumed his usual habits of life at Abbotsford — the musing ramble among his own glens, the breezy ride over the moors, the merry spell at the woodman's axe, or the festive chase of Newark, Fernilee, Hangingshaw, or Deloraine; the quiet old-fashioned contentment of the little domestic circle, alternating with the brilliant phantasmagoria of admiring, and sometimes admired, strangers — or the hoisting of the telegraph flag that called laird and bonnet-laird to the burning of the water, or the wassail of the hall. The hours of the closet alone had found a change. The preparation for the Life of Napoleon was a course of such hard reading as had not been called for while "the great magician," in the full sunshine of ease, amused himself, and delighted the world, by unrolling, fold after fold, his endlessly varied panorama of romance. That miracle had to all appearance cost him no effort. Unmoved and serene among the multiplicities of worldly business, and the invasions of half Europe and America, he had gone on tranquilly, enjoying rather than exerting his genius, in the production of those masterpieces which

have peopled all our firesides with inexpensive friends, and rendered the solitary supremacy of Shakspeare, as an all-comprehensive and genial painter of man, no longer a proverb.

He had, while this was the occupation of his few desk-hours, read only for his diversion. How much he read even then, his correspondence may have afforded some notion. Those who observed him the most constantly, were never able to understand how he contrived to keep himself so thoroughly up to the stream of contemporary literature of almost all sorts, French and German, as well as English. That a rapid glance might tell him more than another man could gather by a week's poring, may easily be guessed; but the grand secret was his perpetual practice of his own grand maxim, *never to be doing nothing*. He had no 'unconsidered trifles' of time. Every moment was turned to account; and thus he had leisure for everything — except, indeed, the newspapers, which consume so many precious hours now-a-days, with most men, and of which, during the period of my acquaintance with him, he certainly read less than any other man I ever knew that had any habit of reading at all. I should also except, speaking generally, the Reviews and Magazines of the time. Of these he saw few, and of the few he read little.

He had now to apply himself doggedly to the mastering of a huge accumulation of historical materials. He read, and noted, and indexed with the pertinacity of some pale compiler in the British Museum; but rose from such employment, not radiant and buoyant, as after he had been feasting himself among the teeming harvests of Fancy, but with an aching brow, and eyes on which the dimness of years had begun to plant some specks,

before they were subjected again to that straining over small print and difficult manuscript which had, no doubt, been familiar to them in the early time, when (in Shortreed's phrase) "he was making himself." It was a pleasant sight when one happened to take a passing peep into his den, to see the white head erect, and the smile of conscious inspiration on his lips, while the pen, held boldly and at a commanding distance, glanced steadily and gaily along a fast-blackening page of "The Talisman." It now often made me sorry to catch a glimpse of him, stooping and poring with his spectacles, amidst piles of authorities, a little note-book ready in the left hand, that had always used to be at liberty for patting Maida. To observe this was the more painful, because I had at that time to consult him about some literary proposals, the closing with which would render it necessary for me to abandon my profession and residence in Edinburgh, and with them the hope of being able to relieve him of some part of the minor labours in which he was now involved — an assistance on which he had counted when he undertook this historical task. There were then about me, indeed, cares and anxieties of various sorts, that might have thrown a shade even over a brighter vision of his interior. For the circumstance that finally determined me, and reconciled him as to the proposed alteration in my views of life, was the failing health of an infant equally dear to us both. It was, in a word, the opinion of our medical friends, that the short-lived child of many and high hopes, whose name will go down to posterity with one of Sir Walter's most precious works, could hardly survive another northern winter; and we all flattered ourselves with the anticipation that my removal to London at the close of 1825

might pave the way for a happy resumption of the cottage at Chiefswood in the ensuing summer. *Dis aliter visum.*

During the latter months of 1825, while the matter to which I have alluded was yet undecided, I had to make two hurried journeys to London, by which I lost the opportunity of witnessing Sir Walter's reception of several eminent persons with whom he then formed or ratified a friendship; — among others the late admirable Master of the Rolls, Lord Gifford, and his Lady — who spent some days at Abbotsford, and detected nothing of the less agreeable features in its existence, which I have been dwelling upon; Dr. Philpotts, now Bishop of Exeter; and also the brother bard, who had expressed his regret at not being present "when Scott and Killarney were introduced to each other." No more welcome announcement ever reached Scott than Mr. Moore's of his purpose to make out, that same season, his long meditated expedition to Scotland; and the characteristic opening and close of the reply will not, I hope, be thrown away upon my reader, any more than they were on the warm-hearted minstrel of Erin.

"*To Thomas Moore, Esq., Sloperton Cottage, Devizes.*

"Abbotsford, Thursday.

"My Dear Sir, — Damn Sir — My Dear Moore, — Few things could give me more pleasure than your realizing the prospect your letter holds out to me. We are at Abbotsford fixtures till 10th November, when my official duty, for I am 'slave to an hour and vassal to a bell,'* calls me to Edinburgh. I hope you will give me as much of your time as you can — no one will value it more highly.

* *Oldham's Satires* — See Scott's *Dryden*, vol. xi. p. 101.

"You keep the great north road till you come to the last stage in England, Cornhill, and then take up the Tweed to Kelso. If I knew what day you would be at Kelso, I would come down and do the honours of Tweedside, by bringing you here, and showing you anything that is remarkable by the way; but though I could start at a moment's warning, I should 'scarce, I fear, have time to receive a note from Newcastle soon enough to admit of my reaching you at Kelso. Drop me a line, however, at all events; and, in coming from Kelso to Melrose and Abbotsford, be sure to keep the southern side of the Tweed, both because it is far the pleasantest route, and because I will come a few miles to take the chance of meeting you. You do not mention whether you have any fellow-travellers. We have plenty of accommodation for any part of your family, or any friend, who may be with you.— Yours, in great joy and expectation, WALTER SCOTT."

Mr. Moore arrived accordingly — and he remained several days. Though not, I believe, a regular journalizer, he kept a brief diary during his Scotch tour, and he has kindly allowed me the use of it. He fortunately found Sir Walter in an interval of repose — no one with him at Abbotsford but Lady and Miss Scott — and no company at dinner except the Fergussons and Laidlaw. The two poets had thus the opportunity of a great deal of quiet conversation; and from the hour they met, they seemed to have treated each other with a full confidence, the record of which, however touchingly honourable to both, could hardly be made public *in extenso* while one of them survives. The first day they were alone after dinner, and the talk turned chiefly on the recent death of Byron — from which Scott passed unaffectedly to his own literary history. Mr. Moore listened with great interest to details, now no longer new, about the early days of ballad-hunting, Mat Lewis, the Minstrelsy, and the

Poems; and "at last," says he, "to my no small surprise, as well as pleasure, he mentioned the novels, without any reserve, as his own. He gave me an account of the original progress of those extraordinary works, the hints supplied for them, the conjectures and mystification to which they had given rise, &c. &c.:" he concluded with saying, "they have been a mine of wealth to me — but I find I fail in them now — I can no longer make them so good as at first." This frankness was met as it should have been by the brother poet; and when he entered Scott's room next morning, "he laid his hand," says Mr. Moore, "with a sort of cordial earnestness on my breast, and said — *Now, my dear Moore, we are friends for life.*" They sallied out for a walk through the plantations, and among other things, the commonness of the poetic talent in these days was alluded to. "Hardly a Magazine is now published," said Moore, "that does not contain verses which some thirty years ago would have made a reputation." — Scott turned with his look of shrewd humour, as if chuckling over his own success, and said, "Ecod, we were in the luck of it to come before these fellows;" but he added, playfully flourishing his stick as he spoke, "we have, like Bobadil, taught them to beat us with our own weapons." — "In complete novelty," says Moore, "he seemed to think, lay the only chance for a man ambitious of high literary reputation in these days."

Mr. Moore was not less pleased than Washington Irving had been nine years before with Scott's good friend at Kaeside. He says —

"Our walk was to the cottage of Mr. Laidlaw, his bailiff, a gentleman who had been reduced beneath his due level in

life, and of whom Scott spoke with the most cordial respect. His intention was, he said, to ask him to come down and dine with us: — the cottage homely, but the man himself, with his broad Scotch dialect, showing all the quiet self-possession of good breeding and good sense."

At Melrose, writes Mr. Moore —

"With the assistance of the sexton, a shrewd, sturdy-mannered original, he explained to me all the parts of the ruin; after which we were shown up to a room in the sexton's house, filled with casts done by himself, from the ornaments, heads, &c. of the Abbey. Seeing a large niche empty, Scott said, 'Johnny, I'll give you a Virgin and Child to put in that place.' Never did I see a happier face than Johnny's at this news — it was all over smiles. 'But, Johnny,' continued Scott, as we went down stairs, 'I'm afraid, if there should be another anti-popish rising, you'll have your house pulled about your ears.' When we had got into the carriage, I said, 'You have made that man most truly happy.' — 'Ecod, then,' he replied, 'there are two of us pleased, for I was very much puzzled to know what to do with that Virgin and Child; and mamma particularly' (meaning Lady Scott) 'will be delighted to get rid of it.' A less natural man would have allowed me to remain under the impression that he had really done a very generous thing."

They called the same morning at Huntly Burn: —

"I could not help thinking," says Moore, "during this homely visit, how astonished some of those French friends of mine would be, among whom the name of Sir Walter Scott is encircled only with high and romantic associations, to see the quiet, neighbourly manner in which he took his seat beside these good old maids, and the familiar ease with which they treated him in return. No common squire indeed, with but half an idea in his head, could have fallen into the gossip of a humdrum country-visit with more unassumed simplicity."

Mr. Moore would have been likely to make the same sort of observation had he accompanied Sir Walter into any other house in the valley; but he could not be expected to appreciate off-hand the very uncommon intellectual merits of "those old maids" of Huntly Burn — who had enjoyed the inestimable advantage of living from youth to age in the atmosphere of genius, learning, good sense, and high principle.

He was of course delighted at the dinner which followed, when Scott had collected his neighbours to enjoy his guest, with the wit and humour of Sir Adam Fergusson, his picturesque stories of the Peninsula, and his inimitable singing of the old Jacobite ditties.

"Nothing," he writes, "could be more hearty and radiant than Scott's enjoyment of them, though his attempts to join in the chorus showed certainly far more of will than of power. He confessed that he hardly knew high from low in music. I told him that Lord Byron, in the same manner, knew nothing of music as an art, but still had a strong feeling of it, and that I had more than once seen the tears come into his eyes as he listened. 'I dare say,' said Scott, 'that Byron's feeling and mine about music might be pretty much the same.' — I was much struck by his description of a scene he had once with Lady —— (the divorced Lady ——) upon her eldest boy, who had been born before her marriage with Lord ——, asking her why he himself was not Lord —— (the second title.) 'Do you hear that?' she exclaimed wildly to Scott; and then rushing to the pianoforte, played, in a sort of frenzy, some hurried airs, as if to drive away the dark thoughts then in her mind. It struck me that he spoke of this lady as if there had been something more than mere friendship between them. He described her as beautiful and full of character.

"In reference to his own ignorance of musical matters, Scott mentioned that he had been once employed as counsel

upon a case where a purchaser of a fiddle had been imposed upon as to its value. He found it necessary, accordingly, to prepare himself by reading all about fiddles and fiddlers that he could find in the Encyclopædia, &c.; and having got the names of Straduarius, Amati, and such like, glibly upon his tongue, he got swimmingly through his cause. Not long after this, dining at ——, he found himself left alone after dinner with the Duke, who had but two subjects he could talk upon — hunting and music. Having exhausted hunting, Scott thought he would bring forward his lately acquired learning in fiddles, upon which his Grace became quite animated, and immediately whispered some orders to the butler, in consequence of which there soon entered into the room about half-a-dozen tall footmen, each bearing a fiddle-case; and Scott now found his musical knowledge brought to no less trying a test than that of telling, by the tone of each fiddle, as the Duke played it, by what artist it had been made. 'By guessing and management,' he said, 'I got on pretty well, till we were, to my great relief, summoned to coffee.'"

In handing to me the pages from which I have taken these scraps, Mr. Moore says — "I parted from Scott with the feeling that all the world might admire him in his works, but that those only could learn to love him as he deserved who had seen him at Abbotsford. I give you *carte blanche* to say what you please of my sense of his cordial kindness and gentleness; perhaps a not very dignified phrase would express my feeling better than any fine one — it was that he was a *thorough good fellow.*" What Scott thought of Moore, the reader shall see presently.

The author of Lalla Rookh's Kelso chaise was followed before many days by a more formidable equipage. The much-talked-of lady who began life as Miss Harriet Mellon, a comic actress in a provincial troop, and died

Duchess of St. Albans, was then making a tour in Scotland as Mrs. Coutts, the enormously wealthy widow of the first English banker of his time. No person of such consequence could, in those days, have thought a Scotch progress complete, unless it included a reception at Abbotsford; but Mrs. Coutts had been previously acquainted with Sir Walter, who, indeed, had some remote connexion with her late husband's family, through the Stuarts of Allanbank, I believe, or perhaps the Swintons of Swinton. He had visited her occasionally in London during Mr. Coutts's life, and was very willing to do the honours of Teviotdale in return. But although she was considerate enough not to come on him with all her retinue, leaving four of the seven carriages with which she travelled at Edinburgh, the appearance of only three coaches, each drawn by four horses, was rather trying for poor Lady Scott. They contained Mrs. Coutts — her future lord the Duke of St. Albans — one of his Grace's sisters — a *dame de compagnie* (vulgarly styled a Toady) — a brace of physicians — for it had been considered that one doctor might himself be disabled in the course of an expedition so adventurous — and, besides other menials of every grade, two bedchamber women for Mrs. Coutts's own person; she requiring to have this article also in duplicate, because, in her widowed condition, she was fearful of ghosts — and there must be one Abigail for the service of the toilette, a second to keep watch by night. With a little puzzling and cramming, all this train found accommodation; but it so happened that there were already in the house several ladies, Scotch and English, of high birth and rank, who felt by no means disposed to assist their host and hostess in making Mrs. Coutts's visit agreeable to her. They had heard a great deal, and they saw

something, of the ostentation almost inseparable from wealth so vast as had come into her keeping. They were on the outlook for absurdity and merriment; and I need not observe how effectually women of fashion can contrive to mortify, without doing or saying anything that shall expose them to the charge of actual incivility.

Sir Walter, during dinner, did everything in his power to counteract this influence of *the evil eye*, and something to overawe it; but the spirit of mischief had been fairly stirred, and it was easy to see that Mrs. Coutts followed these noble dames to the drawing-room in by no means that complacent mood which was customarily sustained, doubtless, by every blandishment of obsequious flattery, in this mistress of millions. He cut the gentlemen's sederunt short, and soon after joining the ladies, managed to withdraw the youngest, and gayest, and cleverest, who was also the highest in rank (a lovely Marchioness), into his armorial-hall adjoining. "I said to her" (he told me), "I want to speak a word with you about Mrs. Coutts. We have known each other a good while, and I know you won't take anything I can say in ill part. It is, I hear, not uncommon among the fine ladies in London to be very well pleased to accept invitations, and even sometimes to hunt after them, to Mrs. Coutts's grand balls and fêtes, and then, if they meet her in any private circle, to practise on her the delicate *manœuvre* called *tipping the cold shoulder*. This you agree with me is shabby; but it is nothing new either to you or to me that fine people will do shabbinesses for which beggars might blush, if they once stoop so low as to poke for tickets. I am sure you would not for the world do such a thing; but you must permit me to take the great liberty of saying, that I think the style you have all received my guest

Mrs. Coutts in, this evening, is, to a certain extent, a sin of the same order. You were all told a couple of days ago that I had accepted her visit, and that she would arrive to-day to stay three nights. Now if any of you had not been disposed to be of my party at the same time with her, there was plenty of time for you to have gone away before she came; and as none of you moved, and it was impossible to fancy that any of you would remain out of mere curiosity, I thought I had a perfect right to calculate on your having made up your minds to help me out with her." The beautiful Peeress answered, "I thank you, Sir Walter; — you have done me the great honour to speak as if I had been your daughter, and depend upon it you shall be obeyed with heart and goodwill." One by one, the other exclusives were seen engaged in a little *tête-à-tête* with her ladyship. Sir Walter was soon satisfied that things had been put into a right train; the Marchioness was requested to sing a particular song, *because* he thought it would please Mrs. Coutts. "Nothing could gratify her more than to please Mrs. Coutts." Mrs. Coutts's brow smoothed, and in the course of half-an-hour she was as happy and easy as ever she was in her life, rattling away at comical anecdotes of her early theatrical years, and joining in the chorus of Sir Adam's *Laird of Cockpen*. She stayed out her three days * — saw, accompanied by all the circle, Melrose, Dryburgh, and Yarrow — and left Abbotsford delighted with her host, and, to all appearance, with his other guests.

It may be said (for the most benevolent of men had in

* Sir Walter often quoted the maxim of an old lady in one of Miss Ferrier's novels — that a visit should never exceed three days, "the *rest* day — the *drest* day — and the *prest* day."

his lifetime, and still has, some maligners) that he was so anxious about Mrs. Coutts's comfort, because he worshipped wealth. I dare not deny that he set more of his affections, during great part of his life, upon worldly things, wealth among others, than might have become such an intellect. One may conceive a sober grandeur of mind, not incompatible with genius as rich as even his, but infinitely more admirable than any genius, incapable of brooding upon any of the pomps and vanities of this life — or caring about money at all, beyond what is necessary for the easy sustenance of nature. But we must, in judging the most powerful of minds, take into account the influences to which they were exposed in the plastic period; and where imagination is visibly the predominant faculty, allowance must be made very largely indeed. Scott's autobiographical fragment, and the anecdotes annexed to it, have been printed in vain, if they have not conveyed the notion of such a training of the mind, fancy, and character, as could hardly fail to suggest dreams and aspirations very likely, were temptation presented, to take the shape of active external ambition — to prompt a keen pursuit of those resources, without which visions of worldly splendour cannot be realized. But I think the subsequent narrative, with the correspondence embodied in it, must also have satisfied every candid reader that his appetite for wealth was, after all, essentially a vivid yearning for the means of large beneficence. As to his being capable of the silliness — to say nothing of the meanness — of allowing any part of his feelings or demeanour towards others to be affected by their mere possession of wealth, I cannot consider such a suggestion as worthy of much remark. He had a kindness towards Mrs. Coutts, because he knew that, vain and pompous as

her displays of equipage and attendance might be, she mainly valued wealth, like himself, as the instrument of doing good. Even of her apparently most fantastic indulgences he remembered, as Pope did when ridiculing the "lavish cost and little skill" of his Timon,

"Yet hence the poor are clothed, the hungry fed;" —

but he interfered, to prevent her being made uncomfortable in his house, neither more nor less than he would have done, had she come there in her original character of a comic actress, and been treated with coldness as such by his Marchionesses and Countesses.

Since I have been led to touch on what many always considered as the weak part of his character — his over respect for worldly things in general, — I must say one word as to the matter of rank, which undoubtedly had infinitely more effect on him than money. In the first place, he was all along courted by the great world — not it by him; and, secondly, pleased as he was with its attentions, he derived infinitely greater pleasure from the trusting and hearty affection of his old equals, and the inferiors whose welfare he so unweariedly promoted. But, thirdly, he made acute discriminations among the many different orders of claimants who jostle each other for preëminence in the curiously complicated system of modern British society. His imagination had been constantly exercised in recalling and embellishing whatever features of the past it was possible to connect with any pleasing ideas, and a historical name was a charm that literally stirred his blood. But not so a mere title. He reverenced the Duke of Buccleuch — but it was not as a Duke, but as the head of his clan, the representative of the old knights of Branxholm. In the Duke of Hamilton

he saw not the premier peer of Scotland, but the lineal heir of the heroic old Douglasses; and he had profounder respect for the chief of a Highland Clan, without any title whatever, and with an ill-paid rental of two or three thousand a-year, than for the haughtiest magnate in a blue ribbon, whose name did not call up any grand historical reminiscence. I remember once when he had some young Englishmen of high fashion in his house, there arrived a Scotch gentleman of no distinguished appearance, whom he received with a sort of eagerness and *empressement* of reverential courtesy that struck the strangers as quite out of the common. His name was that of a Scotch Earl, however, and no doubt he was that nobleman's son. "Well," said one of the Southrons to me, — "I had never heard that the Earl of —— was one of your very greatest lords in this country; even a second son of his, booby though he be, seems to be of wonderful consideration." The young English lord heard with some surprise, that the visiter in question was a poor lieutenant on half-pay, heir to a tower about as crazy as Don Quixote's, and noways related (at least according to English notions of relationship) to the Earl of ——. "What, then," he cried, "what *can* Sir Walter mean?" "Why," said I, "his meaning is very clear. This gentleman is the male representative (which the Earl of —— may possibly be in the female line) of a knight who is celebrated by our old poet Blind Harry, as having signalized himself by the side of Sir William Wallace, and from whom every Scotchman that bears the name of —— has at least the ambition of being supposed to descend." — Sir Walter's own title came unsought; and that he accepted it, not in the foolish fancy that such a title, or any title, could increase his own personal consequence, but because

he thought it fair to embrace the opportunity of securing a certain external distinction to his heirs at Abbotsford, was proved pretty clearly by his subsequently declining the greatly higher, but intransmissible rank of a Privy-Councillor. At the same time, I dare say his ear liked the knightly sound; and undoubtedly he was much pleased with the pleasure his wife took, and gaily acknowledged she took, in being My Lady.

The circumstances of the King's visit in 1822, and others already noted, leave no doubt that imagination enlarged and glorified for him many objects to which it is very difficult for ordinary men in our generation to attach much importance; and perhaps he was more apt to attach importance to such things, during the prosperous course of his own fortunes, than even a liberal consideration of circumstances can altogether excuse. To myself it seems to have been so; yet I do not think the severe critics on this part of his story have kept quite sufficiently in mind how easy it is for us all to undervalue any species of temptation to which we have not happened to be exposed. I am aware, too, that there are examples of men of genius, situated to a certain extent like him, who have resisted and repelled the fascinations against which he was not entirely proof; but I have sometimes thought that they did so at the expense of parts of their character nearer the marrow of humanity than those which his weakness in this way tended to endamage; that they mingled, in short, in their virtuous self-denial, some grains of sacrifice at the shrine of a cold, unsocial, even sulky species of self-conceit. But this digression has already turned out much longer than I intended.

Mrs. Coutts and her three coaches astonished Abbots-

ford but a few days after I returned to Chiefswood from one of my rapid journeys to London. While in the metropolis on that occasion, I had heard a great deal more than I understood about the commercial excitement of the time. For several years preceding 1825, the plethora of gold on the one hand, and the wildness of impatient poverty on the other, had been uniting their stimulants upon the blood and brain of the most curious of all concretes, individual or national, "John Bull;" nor had sober "Sister Peg" escaped the infection of disorders which appear to recur, at pretty regular periods, in the sanguine constitution of her brother. They who had accumulated great masses of wealth, dissatisfied with the usual rates of interest under a conscientious government really protective of property, had embarked in the most perilous and fantastic schemes for piling visionary Pelions upon the real Ossa of their money-bags; and unscrupulous dreamers, who had all to gain and nothing to lose, found it easy to borrow, from cash-encumbered neighbours, the means of pushing adventures of their own devising, more extravagant than had been heard of since the days of the South Sea and Mississippi bubbles. Even persons who had extensive and flourishing businesses in their hands, partook the general rage of infatuation. He whose own shop, counting-house, or warehouse, had been sufficient to raise him to a decent and safely-increasing opulence, and was more than sufficient to occupy all his attention, drank in the vain delusion that he was wasting his time and energy on things unworthy of a masculine ambition, and embarked the resources necessary for the purposes of his lawful calling, in speculations worthy of the land-surveyors of El Dorado. It was whispered that *the trade*

(so called, *par excellence*) had been bitten with this fever; and persons of any foresight who knew (as I did not at that time know) the infinitely curious links by which booksellers, and printers, and paper-makers (and therefore authors) are bound together, high and low, town and country, for good and for evil, already began to prophesy that, whenever the general crash, which must come ere long, should arrive, its effects would be felt far and wide among all classes connected with the productions of the press. When it was rumoured that this great bookseller, or printer, had become a principal holder of South American mining shares — that another was the leading director of a railway company — a third of a gas company — while a fourth house had risked about £100,000 in a cast upon the most capricious of all agricultural products, *hops*, — it was no wonder that bankers should begin to calculate balances, and pause upon discounts.

Among other hints to the tune of *periculosæ plenum opus aleæ* which reached my ear, were some concerning a splendid bookselling establishment in London, with which I knew the Edinburgh house of Constable to be closely connected in business. Little suspecting the extent to which any mischance of Messrs. Hurst and Robinson must involve Sir Walter's own responsibilities, I transmitted to him the rumours in question as I received them. Before I could have his answer, a legal friend of mine, well known to Scott also, told me that people were talking doubtfully about Constable's own stability. I thought it probable, that if Constable fell into any pecuniary embarrassments, Scott might suffer the inconvenience of losing the copy-money of his last novel. Nothing more serious occurred to me. But I thought it my duty

to tell him this whisper also; and heard from him, almost by return of post, that, shake who might in London, his friend in Edinburgh was "rooted, as well as branched, like the oak." Knowing his almost painfully accurate habits of business as to matters of trivial moment, I doubted not that he had ample grounds for being quite easy as to any concerns of his own with his publisher; and though I turned northwards with anxiety enough, none of the burden had reference to that subject.

A few days, however, after my arrival at Chiefswood, I received a letter from the legal friend already alluded to — (Mr. William Wright, the eminent barrister of Lincoln's Inn, — who, by the way, was also on habits of great personal familiarity with Constable, and liked *the Czar* exceedingly) — which renewed my apprehensions, or rather, for the first time, gave me any suspicion that there really might be something "rotten in the state of *Muscovy*." Mr. Wright informed me that it was reported in London that Constable's London banker had thrown up his book. This letter reached me about five o'clock, as I was sitting down to dinner; and, about an hour afterwards, I rode over to Abbotsford, to communicate its contents. I found Sir Walter alone over his glass of whisky and water and cigar — at this time, whenever there was no company, "his custom always in the afternoon." I gave him Mr. Wright's letter to read. He did so, and returning it, said, quite with his usual tranquil good-humour of look and voice, "I am much obliged to you for coming over, but you may rely upon it Wright has been hoaxed. I promise you, were the Crafty's book thrown up, there would be a pretty decent scramble among the bankers for the keeping of it. There may have been some little dispute or misunderstanding, which

malice and envy have exaggerated in this absurd style; but I shan't allow such nonsense to disturb my *siesta.* Don't you see," he added, lighting another cigar, "that Wright could not have heard of such a transaction the very day it happened? And can you doubt, that if Constable had been informed of it yesterday, this day's post must have brought me intelligence direct from him?" I ventured to suggest that this last point did not seem to me clear; that Constable might not, perhaps, in such a case, be in so great a hurry with his intelligence. "Ah!" said he, "the Crafty and James Ballantyne have been so much connected in business, that Fatsman would be sure to hear of anything so important; and I like the notion of his hearing it, and not sending me one of his malagrugrous *billets-doux.* He could as soon keep his eyebrows in their place if you told him there was a fire in his nursery."

Seeing how coolly he treated my news, I went home relieved and gratified. Next morning, as I was rising, behold Peter Mathieson at my door, his horses evidently off a journey, and the Sheriff rubbing his eyes as if the halt had shaken him out of a sound sleep. I made what haste I could to descend, and found him by the side of the brook looking somewhat worn, but with a serene and satisfied countenance, busied already in helping his little grandson to feed a fleet of ducklings. "You are surprised," he said, "to see me here. The truth is, I was more taken aback with Wright's epistle than I cared *to let on;* and so, as soon as you left me, I ordered the carriage to the door, and never stopped till I got to Polton, where I found Constable putting on his nightcap. I staid an hour with him, and I have now the pleasure to tell you that *all is right.* There

was not a word of truth in the story — he is fast as Ben Lomond; and as Mamma and Anne did not know what my errand was, I thought it as well to come and breakfast here, and set Sophia and you at your ease before I went home again."

We had a merry breakfast, and he chatted gaily afterwards as I escorted him through his woods, leaning on my shoulder all the way, which he seldom as yet did, except with Tom Purdie, unless when he was in a more than commonly happy and affectionate mood. But I confess the impression this incident left on my mind was not a pleasant one. It was then that I first began to harbour a suspicion, that if anything should befall Constable, Sir Walter would suffer a heavier loss than the nonpayment of some one novel. The night journey revealed serious alarm. My wife suggested, as we talked things over, that his alarm had been, not on his own account, but Ballantyne's, who, in case evil came on the great employer of his types, might possibly lose a year's profit on them, which neither she nor I doubted must amount to a large sum — any more than that a misfortune of Ballantyne's would grieve her father as much as one personal to himself. His warm regard for his printer could be no secret; we well knew that James was his confidential critic — his trusted and trustworthy friend from boyhood. Nor was I ignorant that Scott had a share in the property of Ballantyne's Edinburgh Weekly Journal. I hinted, under the year 1820, that a dispute arose about the line to be adopted by that paper in the matter of the Queen's trial, and that Scott employed his authority towards overruling the Editor's disposition to espouse the anti-ministerial side of that unhappy question. He urged every argument in his

power, and in vain; for James had a just sense of his own responsibility as editor, and conscientiously differing from Sir Walter's opinion, insisted, with honourable firmness, on maintaining his own until he should be denuded of his office. I happened to be present at one of their conversations on this subject, and in the course of it Scott used language which distinctly implied that he spoke not merely as a friend, but as a joint-proprietor of the Journal. Nor did it seem at all strange that this should be so. But that Sir Walter was and had all along been James's partner in the great printing concern, neither I, nor, I believe, any member of his family, had entertained the slightest suspicion prior to the coming calamities which were now "casting their shadows before."

It is proper to add here, that the story about the banker's throwing up the book was, as subsequent revelations attested, groundless. Sir Walter's first guess as to its origin proved correct.

A few days afterwards, Mr. Murray of Albemarle Street sent me a transcript of Lord Byron's Ravenna Diary, with permission for my neighbour also to read it if he pleased. Sir Walter read those extraordinary pages with the liveliest interest, and filled several of the blank leaves and margins with illustrative annotations and anecdotes, some of which have lately been made public, as the rest will doubtless be hereafter. In perusing what Byron had jotted down from day to day in the intervals of regular composition, it very naturally occurred to Sir Walter that the noble poet had done well to avoid troubling himself by any adoption or affectation of plan or order — giving an opinion, a reflection, a reminiscence, serious or comic, or the incidents

of the passing hour, just as the spirit moved him, — and seeing what a mass of curious things, such as "after times would not willingly let die," had been thus rescued from oblivion at a very slight cost of exertion, — he resolved to attempt keeping thenceforth a somewhat similar record. A thick quarto volume, bound in vellum, with a lock and key, was forthwith procured; and Sir Walter began the journal, from which I shall begin, in the next chapter, to draw copiously. The occupation of a few stray minutes in his dressing-room at getting up in the morning, or after he had retired for the night, was found a pleasant variety for him. He also kept the book by him when in his study, and often had recourse to it when anything puzzled him and called for a halt in the prosecution of what he considered (though posterity will hardly do so) a more important task. It was extremely fortunate that he took up this scheme exactly at the time when he settled seriously to the history of Buonaparte's personal career. The sort of preparation which every chapter of that book now called for has been already alluded to; and — although, when he had fairly read himself up to any one great cycle of transactions, his old spirit roused itself in full energy, and he traced the record with as rapid and glowing a pencil as he had ever wielded — there were minutes enough, and hours, and perhaps days, of weariness, depression, and languor, when (unless this silent confidant had been at hand) even he perhaps might have made no use of his writing-desk.

Even the new resource of journalizing, however, was not sufficient. He soon convinced himself that it would facilitate, not impede, his progress with Napoleon, to have a work of imagination in hand also. The success

of the Tales of the Crusaders had been very high; and Constable, well aware that it had been his custom of old to carry on two romances at the same time, was now too happy to encourage him in beginning *Woodstock*, to be taken up whenever the historical MS. should be in advance of the press.

Of the progress both of the Novel and the History, the Journal will afford us fuller and clearer details than I have been able to produce as to any of his preceding works; but before I open that sealed book, I believe it will be satisfactory to the reader that I should present (as briefly as I can) my own view of the melancholy change in Sir Walter's worldly fortunes, to which almost every page of the Diary, during several sad and toilsome years, contains some allusion. So doing, I shall avoid (in some measure at least) the necessity of interrupting, by awkward explanations, the easy tenor of perhaps the most candid Diary that ever man penned.

The early history of Scott's connexion with the Ballantynes has been already given in abundant detail; and I have felt it my duty not to shrink, at whatever pain to my own feelings or those of others, from setting down, plainly and distinctly, my own impressions of the character, manners, and conduct of those two very dissimilar brothers. I find, without surprise, that my representations of them have not proved satisfactory to their surviving relations. That I cannot help — though I sincerely regret, having been compelled, in justice to Scott, to become the instrument for opening old wounds in kind bosoms, animated, I doubt not, like my own, by veneration for his memory, and respected by me for combining that feeling with a tender concern for names so intimately connected with his throughout long years

of mutual confidence. But I have been entirely mistaken if those to whom I allude, or any others of my readers, have interpreted any expressions of mine as designed to cast the slightest imputation on the moral rectitude of the elder Ballantyne. No suspicion of that nature ever crossed my mind. I believe James to have been, from first to last, a perfectly upright man; that his principles were of a lofty stamp — his feelings pure, even to simplicity. His brother John had many amiable as well as amusing qualities, and I am far from wishing to charge even him with any deep or deliberate malversation. Sir Walter's own epithet of "my little picaroon" indicates all that I desired to imply on that score. But John was, from mere giddiness of head and temper, incapable of conducting any serious business advantageously, either for himself or for others; nor dare I hesitate to express my conviction that, from failings of a different sort, honest James was hardly a better manager than the picaroon.

He had received the education, not of a printer, but of a solicitor; and he never, to his dying day, had the remotest knowledge or feeling of what the most important business of a master-printer consists in. He had a fine taste for the effect of types — no establishment turned out more beautiful specimens of the art than his; but he appears never to have understood that types need watching as well as setting. If the page looked handsome, he was satisfied. He had been instructed, that on every £50 paid in his men's wages, the master-printer is entitled to an equal sum of gross profit; and beyond this *rule of thumb* calculation, no experience could bring him to penetrate his *mystery*. In a word, James never comprehended that in the greatest and most regularly em-

ployed manufactory of this kind (or indeed of any kind) the profits are likely to be entirely swallowed up, unless the acting master keeps up a most wakeful scrutiny, from week to week, and from day to day, as to the machinery and the materials. So far was he from doing this, that during several of the busiest and most important years of his connexion with the establishment in the Canongate, he seldom crossed its doors. He sat in his own elbow-chair, in a comfortable library, situated in a different street — not certainly an idle man — quite the reverse, though naturally indolent — but the most negligent and inefficient of master-printers.

He was busy, indeed; and inestimably serviceable to Scott was his labour; but it consisted simply and solely in the correction and revisal of proof-sheets. It is most true, that Sir Walter's hurried and careless method of composition rendered it absolutely necessary that whatever he wrote should be subjected to far more than the usual amount of inspection required at the hands of the printer; and it is equally so, that it would have been extremely difficult to find another man willing and able to bestow such time and care on his proof-sheets as they uniformly received from James. But this was, in fact, not the proper occupation of the man who was at the head of the establishment — who had undertaken the pecuniary management of the concern. In every other great printing-house that I have known anything about, there are intelligent and well-educated men, called, technically, *readers*, who devote themselves to this species of labour, and who are, I fear, seldom paid in proportion to its importance. Dr. Goldsmith, in his early life, was such a *reader* in the printing-house of Richardson; but the author of Clarissa did not disdain to look after the

presses and types himself, or he would never have accumulated the fortune that enabled him to be the liberal employer of *readers* like Goldsmith. I quoted, in a preceding volume,* a letter of Scott's, written when John Ballantyne and Co.'s bookselling house was breaking up, in which he says, "One or other of you will need to be constantly in the printing-office *henceforth;* it is the sheet-anchor." This was *ten* years after that establishment began. Thenceforth James, in compliance with this injunction, occupied, during many hours of every day, a small cabinet on the premises in the Canongate; but whoever visited him there, found him at the same eternal business, that of a literator, not that of a printer. He was either editing his newspaper — and he considered that matter as fondly and proudly as Mr. Pott in Pickwick does his Gazette of Eatanswill — or correcting proof-sheets, or writing critical notes and letters to the Author of Waverley. Shakespeare, Addison, Johnson, and Burke, were at his elbow; but not the ledger. We may thus understand poor John's complaint, in what I may call his dying memorandum, of the "large sums abstracted from the bookselling house for the use of the printing-office."† Yet that bookselling house was from the first a hopeless one; whereas, under accurate superintendence, the other ought to have produced the partners a dividend of from £2000 to £3000 a-year, at the very least.

On the other hand, the necessity of providing some remedy for this radical disorder must very soon have forced itself upon the conviction of all concerned, had not John Ballantyne (who had served a brief apprentice-

* See *ante*, Vol. III. p. 267.

† See *ante*, Vol. VI. p. 105.

ship in a London banking-house) introduced his fatal enlightenment on the subject of facilitating discounts, and raising cash by means of accommodation-bills. Hence the perplexed *states* and *calendars* — the wildernesses and labyrinths of ciphers, through which no eye but that of a professed accountant could have detected any clue; hence the accumulation of bills and counter-bills drawn by both bookselling and printing house, and gradually so mixed up with other obligations, that John Ballantyne died in utter ignorance of the condition of their affairs. The pecuniary detail of those affairs then devolved upon James; and I fancy it will be only too apparent that he never made even one serious effort to master the formidable balances of figures thus committed to his sole trust — but in which his all, was not all that was involved.

I need not recapitulate the history of the connexion between these Ballantyne firms and that of Constable. It was traced as accurately as my means permitted in the preceding volumes, with an eye to the catastrophe. I am willing to believe that kindly feelings had no small share in inducing Constable to uphold the credit of John Ballantyne and Company, in their several successive struggles to avoid the exposure of bankruptcy. He was, with pitiable foibles enough, and grievous faults, a man of warm, and therefore, I hardly doubt, of sympathizing temperament. Vain to excess, proud at the same time, haughty, arrogant, presumptuous, despotic — he had still, I am willing to believe, a heart. Persons who knew him longer and better than I did, assure me of their conviction that, in spite of many direct professional hindrances and thwartings, the offspring (as *he* viewed matters) partly of Tory jealousy, and partly of poetical caprice — he had, even at an early period of his life,

formed a genuine affection for Scott's person, as well as a most profound veneration for his genius. I think it very possible that he began his assistance of the Ballantyne companies mainly under this generous influence — and I also believe that he had, in different ways, a friendly leaning in favour of both James and John themselves. But when he, in his overweening self-sufficiency, thought it involved no mighty hazard to indulge his better feelings, as well as his lordly vanity, in shielding these friends from commercial dishonour, he had estimated but loosely the demands of the career of speculation on which he was himself entering. And by and by, when, advancing by one mighty plunge after another in that vast field, he felt in his own person the threatenings of more signal ruin than could have befallen them, this "Napoleon of the press" — still as of old buoyed up to the ultimate result of his grand operations by the most fulsome flatteries of imagination — appears to have tossed aside very summarily all scruples about the extent to which he might be entitled to tax their sustaining credit in requital. The Ballantynes, if they had comprehended all the bearings of the case, were not the men to consider grudgingly demands of this nature, founded on service so important; and who can doubt that Scott viewed them from a chivalrous altitude? It is easy to see, that the moment the obligations became reciprocal, there arose extreme peril of their coming to be hopelessly complicated. It is equally clear, that he ought to have applied on these affairs, as their complication thickened, the acumen which he exerted, and rather prided himself in exerting, on smaller points of worldly business, to the utmost. That he did not, I must always regard as the enigma of his personal history; but various incidents in that history,

which I have already narrated, prove incontestably that he had never done so; and I am unable to account for this having been the case, except on the supposition that his confidence in the resources of Constable and the prudence of James Ballantyne was so entire, that he willingly absolved himself from all duty of active and thoroughgoing superinspection.

It is the extent to which the confusion had gone that constitutes the great puzzle. I have been told that John Ballantyne, in his hey-day, might be heard whistling on his clerk, John Stevenson (True Jock), from the *sanctum* behind the shop, with, "Jock, you lubber, fetch ben a sheaf o' stamps." Such things might well enough be believed of that hare-brained creature; but how sober, solemn James could have made up his mind, as he must have done, to follow much the same wild course whenever any pinch occurred, is to me, I must own, incomprehensible. The books, of course, were kept at the printing-house; and Scott, no doubt, had it in his power to examine them as often as he liked to go there for that purpose. But did he ever descend the Canongate *once* on such an errand? I certainly much question it. I think it very likely that he now and then cast a rapid glance over the details of a week's or a month's operations; but no man who has followed him throughout, can dream that he ever grappled with the sum-total.* During several years it was almost daily my custom to walk home with Sir Walter from the Parliament-house, calling at James's on our way. For the most part I used to amuse myself with a newspaper or proof-sheet in the outer room, while they were closeted in the little cabinet

* It is now ascertained and admitted that the Ballantyne books were *never balanced* during the later years of the connexion. [1839.].

at the corner; and merry were the tones that reached my ear while they remained in colloquy. If I were called in, it was because James, in his ecstasy, must have another to enjoy the dialogue that his friend was improvising — between Meg Dods and Captain Mac-Turk, for example, or Peter Peebles and his counsel.

How shrewdly Scott lectures Terry in May 1825: — "The best business is ruined when it becomes pinched for money, and gets into the circle of discounting bills." — "It is easy to make it feasible on paper, but the times of payment arrive to a certainty." — "I should not like to see *you* take flight like the ingenious mechanist in Rasselas, only to flutter a few yards, and fall into the lake; this would be a heart-breaking business." — "You must be careful that a check shall not throw you on the breakers, and for this there is no remedy but a handsome provision of *the blunt*," &c. &c. Who can read these words — and consider that, at the very hour when they fell from Scott's pen, he was meditating a new purchase of land to the extent of £40,000 — and that nevertheless the "certainty of the arrival of times of payment for discounting bills" was within a few months of being realized to his own ruin; — who can read such words, under such a date, and not sigh the only comment, *sic vos non vobis?*

The reader may perhaps remember a page in a former volume where I described Scott as riding with Johnny Ballantyne and myself round the deserted halls of the ancient family of Riddell, and remarking how much it increased the wonder of their ruin that the late Baronet had "kept day-book and ledger as regularly as any *cheesemonger in the Grassmarket.*" It is, nevertheless, true that Sir Walter kept from first to last as accurate

an account of his own *personal* expenditure as Sir John Riddell could have done of his extravagant outlay on agricultural experiments. The instructions he gave his son, when first joining the 18th Hussars, about the best method of keeping accounts, were copied from his own practice. I could, I believe, place before my reader the sum-total of sixpences that it had cost him to ride through turnpike-gates during a period of thirty years. This was, of course, an early habit mechanically adhered to: but how strange that the man who could persist, however mechanically, in noting down every shilling that he actually drew from his purse, should have allowed others to pledge his credit, year after year, upon sheafs of accommodation paper, "the time for paying which up, must certainly come," without keeping any efficient watch on their proceedings — without knowing, any one Christmas, for how many thousands, or rather tens of thousands, he was responsible as *a printer in the Canongate!*

This is sufficiently astonishing — and had this been all, the result must sooner or later have been sufficiently uncomfortable; but still, in the absence of a circumstance which Sir Walter, however vigilant, could hardly have been expected to anticipate as within the range of possibility, he would have been in no danger of a "check that must throw him on the breakers" — of finding himself, after his flutterings over The Happy Valley, "in the lake." He could never have foreseen a step which Constable took in the frenzied excitement of his day of pecuniary alarm. Owing to the original habitual irregularities of John Ballantyne, it had been adopted as the regular plan between that person and Constable, that, whenever the latter signed a bill for the purpose of the other's raising money among the bankers, there should,

in case of his neglecting to take that bill up before it fell due, be deposited a counter-bill, signed by Ballantyne, on which Constable might, if need were, raise a sum equivalent to that for which he had pledged his credit. I am told that this is an usual enough course of procedure among speculative merchants; and it may be so. But mark the issue. The plan went on under James's management, just as John had begun it. Under his management also — such was the incredible looseness of it — the *counter-bills*, meant only for being sent into the market in the event of the *primary bills* being threatened with dishonour — these instruments of safeguard for Constable against contingent danger were allowed to lie uninquired about in Constable's desk, until they had swelled to a truly monstrous "sheaf of stamps." Constable's hour of distress darkened about him, and he rushed with these to the money-changers. They were nearly all flung into circulation in the course of this maddening period of panic. And by this one circumstance it came to pass, that, supposing Ballantyne and Co. to have, at the day of reckoning, obligations against them, in consequence of bill transactions with Constable, to the extent of £25,000, they were legally responsible for £50,000.

It is not my business to attempt any detailed history of the house of Constable. The sanguine man had, almost at the outset of his career, been "lifted off his feet," in Burns's phrase, by the sudden and unparalleled success of the Edinburgh Review. Scott's poetry and Scott's novels followed; and had he confined himself to those three great and triumphant undertakings, he must have died in possession of a princely fortune. But his "appetite grew with what it fed on," and a long series of less meritorious publications, pushed on, one after the other,

in the craziest rapidity, swallowed up the gains which, however vast, he never counted, and therefore always exaggerated to himself. He had with the only person who might have been supposed capable of controlling him in his later years, the authority of age and a quasi-parental relationship to sustain the natural influence of great and commanding talents; his proud temperament and his glowing imagination played into each other's hands; and he scared suspicion, or trampled remonstrance, whenever (which probably was seldom) he failed to infuse the fervour of his own self-confidence. But even his gross imprudence in the management of his own great business would not have been enough to involve him in absolute ruin: had the matter halted there, and had he, suspending, as he meant to do, all minor operations, concentred his energies, in alliance with Scott, upon the new and dazzling adventure of the Cheap Miscellany, I have no doubt the damage of early misreckonings would soon have been altogether oblitérated. But what he had been to the Ballantynes, certain other still more audacious "Sheafmen" had been to him. The house of Hurst, Robinson, and Co. had long been his London agents and correspondents; and he had carried on with them the same traffic in bills and counter-bills that the Canongate Company did with him — and upon a still larger scale. They had done what he did not — or at least did not to any very culpable extent: they had carried their adventures out of the line of their own business. It was they, for example, that must needs be embarking such vast sums in a speculation on hops! When ruin threatened them, they availed themselves of Constable's credit without stint or limit — while he, feeling darkly that the net was around him, struggled and

splashed for relief, no matter who might suffer, so he escaped! And Sir Walter Scott, sorely as he suffered, was too painfully conscious of the "strong tricks" he had allowed his own imagination to play, not to make merciful allowance for all the apparently monstrous things that I have now been narrating of Constable; though an offence lay behind, which even his charity could not forgive. Of that I need not as yet speak. I have done all that seems to me necessary for enabling the reader to apprehend the nature and extent of the pecuniary difficulties in which Scott was about to be involved, when he commenced his Diary of 1825.

For the rest, his friends, and above all, posterity, are not left to consider his fate without consoling reflections. They who knew and loved him, must ever remember that the real nobility of his character could not have exhibited itself to the world at large, had he not been exposed in his later years to the ordeal of adversity. And others as well as they may feel assured, that had not that adversity been preceded by the perpetual spur of pecuniary demands, he who began life with such quick appetites for all its ordinary enjoyments, would never have devoted himself to the rearing of that gigantic monument of genius, labour, and power, which his works now constitute. The imagination which has bequeathed so much to delight and humanize mankind, would have developed few of its miraculous resources, except in the embellishment of his own personal existence. The enchanted spring might have sunk into earth with the rod that bade it gush, and left us no living waters. We cannot understand, but we may nevertheless respect even the strangest caprices of the marvellous combination of faculties to which our debt is so weighty. We should

try to picture to ourselves what the actual intellectual life must have been, of the author of such a series of romances. We should ask ourselves whether, filling and discharging so soberly and gracefully as he did the common functions of social man, it was not, nevertheless, impossible but that he must have passed most of his life in other worlds than ours; and we ought hardly to think it a grievous circumstance that their bright visions should have left a dazzle sometimes on the eyes which he so gently reopened upon our prosaic realities. He had, on the whole, a command over the powers of his mind — I mean that he could control and direct his thoughts and reflections with a readiness, firmness, and easy security of sway — beyond what I find it possible to trace in any other *artist's* recorded character and history; but he could not habitually fling them into the region of dreams throughout a long series of years, and yet be expected to find a corresponding satisfaction in bending them to the less agreeable considerations which the circumstances of any human being's practical lot in this world must present in abundance. The training to which he accustomed himself could not leave him as he was when he began. He must pay the penalty, as well as reap the glory, of this lifelong abstraction of reverie, this self-abandonment of Fairyland.

This was for him the last year of many things; among others, of Sybil Grey and *the Abbotsford Hunt.* Towards the close of a hard run on his neighbour Mr. Scott of Gala's ground, he adventured to leap *the Catrail* — that venerable relic of the days of

> "Reged wide
> And fair Strath-Clyde,"

of which the reader may remember many notices in his

early letters to George Ellis. He was severely bruised and shattered; and never afterwards recovered the feeling of confidence, without which there can be no pleasure in horsemanship. He often talked of this accident with a somewhat superstitious mournfulness.

CHAPTER LXV.

Sir Walter's Diary begun, November 20, 1825 — *Sketches of various Friends — William Clerk — Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe — Lord Abercrombie — The first Earl of Minto — Lord Byron — Henry Mackenzie — Chief Baron Shepherd — Solicitor-General Hope — Thomas Moore — Charles Mathews — Count Davidoff, &c. &c. — Society of Edinburgh — Religious opinions and feelings — Various alarms about the house of Hurst, Robinson, & Company — "Storm blows over" — and Song of Bonny Dundee, written at Christmas.*

1825.

THE Journal, on which we are about to enter, has on the title-page, "Sir Walter Scott of Abbotsford, Bart., his Gurnal;" — and this foot-note to *Gurnal*, "A hard word, so spelt on the authority of Miss Sophia Scott, now Mrs. Lockhart." This is a little joke, alluding to a note-book kept by his eldest girl during one of the Highland expeditions of earlier days, in which he was accompanied by his wife and children. The *motto* is, —

> "As I walked by myself,
> I talked to myself,
> And thus myself said to me. — *Old Song.*"

These lines are quoted also in his reviewal of Pepys's Diary. That book was published just before he left Edinburgh in July. It was, I believe, the only one he took with him to Ireland; and I never observed him

more delighted with any book whatsoever. He had ever afterwards many of its queer turns and phrases on his lips.

The reader cannot expect that any chapter in a Diary of this sort should be printed *in extenso* within a few years of the writer's death. The editor has, for reasons which need not be explained, found it necessary to omit some passages altogether — to abridge others — and very frequently to substitute asterisks or arbitrary initials for names. But wherever omissions or alterations have been made, these were dictated by regard for the feelings of living persons; and, if any passages which have been retained should prove offensive to such feelings, there is no apology to be offered, but that the editor found they could not be struck out, without losing some statement of fact, opinion, or sentiment, which it seemed impossible to sacrifice without injustice to Sir Walter Scott's character and history.

DIARY.

"*Edinburgh — November* 20, 1825. — I have all my life regretted that I did not keep a regular Journal. I have myself lost recollection of much that was interesting; and I have deprived my family of some curious information by not carrying this resolution into effect. I have bethought me, on seeing lately some volumes of Byron's notes, that he probably had hit upon the right way of keeping such a memorandum-book, by throwing out all pretence to regularity and order, and marking down events just as they occurred to recollection. I will try this plan; and behold, I have a handsome locked volume, such as might serve for a lady's Album. *Nota bene* — John Lockhart, and Anne, and I, are to raise a Society for

the Suppression of Albums. It is a most troublesome shape of mendicity. Sir, your autograph — a line of poetry — or a prose sentence! — Among all the sprawling sonnets, and blotted trumpery that dishonours these miscellanies, a man must have a good stomach that can swallow this botheration as a compliment.

"I was in Ireland last summer, and had a most delightful tour. — There is much less of exaggeration about the Irish than might have been suspected. Their poverty is not exaggerated; it is on the extreme verge of human misery; their cottages would scarce serve for pig-sties, even in Scotland — and their rags seem the very refuse of a rag-shop, and are disposed on their bodies with such ingenious variety of wretchedness, that you would think nothing but some sort of perverted taste could have assembled so many shreds together. You are constantly fearful that some knot or loop will give, and place the individual before you in all the primitive simplicity of Paradise. Then for their food, they have only potatoes, and too few of them. Yet the men look stout and healthy, the women buxom and well-coloured.

"Dined with us, being Sunday, Will Clerk and C. Sharpe. William Clerk is the second son of the celebrated author of 'Naval Tactics.' I have known him intimately since our college days; and to my thinking, never met a man of greater powers, or more complete information on all desirable subjects. In youth he had strongly the Edinburgh *pruritus disputandi;* but habits of society have greatly mellowed it, and though still anxious to gain your suffrage to his views, he endeavours rather to conciliate your opinion than conquer it by force. Still there is enough of tenacity of sentiment to prevent, in London society, where all must go slack and easy, W. C. from rising to the very top of the tree as a conversation man; who must not only wind the thread of his argument gracefully, but also know when to let go. But I like the Scotch taste better; there is more matter, more information — above all, more spirit in it. Clerk will, I am afraid, leave the world little more than the report of his powers. He is too indolent to

finish any considerable work. Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe is another very remarkable man. He was bred for a clergyman, but never took orders. He has infinite wit and a great turn for antiquarian lore, as the publications of Kirkton, &c. bear witness. His drawings are the most fanciful and droll imaginable — a mixture between Hogarth and some of those foreign masters who painted temptations of St. Anthony, and such grotesque subjects. As a poet he has not a very strong touch. Strange that his finger-ends can describe so well what he cannot bring out clearly and firmly in words. If he were to make drawing a resource, it might raise him a large income. But though a lover of antiquities, and, therefore, of expensive trifles, C. K. S. is too aristocratic to use his art to assist his purse. He is a very complete genealogist, and has made many detections in Douglas and other books on pedigree, which our nobles would do well to suppress if they had an opportunity. Strange that a man should be curious after scandal of centuries old! Not but Charles loves it fresh and fresh also, for being very much a fashionable man, he is always master of the reigning report, and he tells the anecdote with such gusto that there is no helping sympathizing with him — a peculiarity of voice adding not a little to the general effect. My idea is, that C. K. S., with his oddities, tastes, satire, and high aristocratic feelings, resembles Horace Walpole — perhaps in his person also, in a general way. — See Miss Hawkins's Anecdotes * for a description of the author of the Castle of Otranto. — No other company at dinner except my cheerful and good-humoured friend *Missie* Macdonald,† so called in fondness. One bottle of champaign, with the ladies' assistance, two of claret. — I observe that both these great connoisseurs were very nearly, if not quite agreed, that there are *no* absolutely undoubted originals of Queen Mary. But how, then, should we be so very distinctly informed as to her features? What has become of all the originals which suggested

* *Anecdotes, Biographical Sketches, and Memoirs*, collected by Lætitia Matilda Hawkins, 8vo, London, 1822, pp. 91–117; 308–313.

† Miss Macdonald Buchanan of Drummakiln.

these innumerable copies? Surely Mary must have been as unfortunate in this as in other particulars of her life.

"*November* 21, 1825. — I am enamoured of my journal. I wish the zeal may but last. — Once more of Ireland. I said their poverty was not exaggerated — neither is their wit — nor their good-humour — nor their whimsical absurdity — nor their courage. *Wit.* — I gave a fellow a shilling on some occasion when sixpence was the fee. 'Remember you owe me sixpence, Pat.' 'May your honour live till I pay you.' There was courtesy as well as art in this, and all the clothes on Pat's back would have been dearly bought by the sum in question.

"*Good-humour.* — There is perpetual kindness in the Irish cabin — butter-milk, potatoes — a stool is offered, or a stone is rolled that your honour may sit down and be out of the smoke, and those who beg everywhere else seem desirous to exercise free hospitality in their own houses. Their natural disposition is turned to gaiety and happiness: while a Scotchman is thinking about the term-day, or, if easy on that subject, about hell in the next world — while an Englishman is making a little hell in the present, because his muffin is not well roasted — Pat's mind is always turned to fun and ridicule. They are terribly excitable, to be sure, and will murder you on slight suspicion, and find out next day that it was all a mistake, and that it was not yourself they meant to kill, at all at all.

"*Absurdity.* — They were widening the road near Lord Claremont's seat as we passed. A number of cars were drawn up together at a particular point, where we also halted, as we understood they were blowing a rock, and the *shot* was expected presently to go off. After waiting two minutes or so, a fellow called out something, and our carriage as a planet, and the cars for satellites, started all forward at once, the Irishmen whooping, and the horses galloping. Unable to learn the meaning of this, I was only left to suppose that they had delayed firing the intended *shot* till we should pass, and that we were passing quickly to make the delay as short as possible. No such thing. By dint of making great haste, we

got within ten yards of the rock just when the blast took place, throwing dust and gravel on our carriage; and had our postillion brought us a little nearer (it was not for want of hollowing and flogging that he did not), we should have had a still more serious share of the explosion. The explanation I received from the drivers was, that they had been told by the overseer that as the *mine* had been *so long* in going off, he dared say we would have time to pass it — so we just waited long enough to make the danger imminent. I have only to add, that two or three people got behind the carriage, just for nothing but to see how our honours got past.

"Went to the Oil Gas Committee this morning, of which concern I am President, or Chairman. This brings me into company with a body of active business-beings, money-making citizens of Edinburgh, chiefly Whigs, by the way, whose sentiments and proceedings amuse me. The stock is rather low in the market.

"Dined with Sir Robert Dundas, where we met Lord and Lady Melville. My little *nieces* (*ex officio*) gave us some pretty music. I do not know and cannot utter a note of music; and complicated harmonies seem to me a babble of confused though pleasing sounds. Yet simple melodies, especially if connected with words and ideas, have as much effect on me as on most people. But then I hate to hear a young person sing without feeling and expression suited to the song. I cannot bear a voice that has no more life in it than a pianoforte or a bugle-horn. There is about all the fine arts a something of soul and spirit, which, like the vital principle in man, defies the research of the most critical anatomist. You feel where it is not, yet you cannot describe what it is you want. Sir Joshua, or some other great painter, was looking at a picture on which much pains had been bestowed — 'Why, yes,' he said, in a hesitating manner, 'it is very clever — very well done — can't find fault; but it wants something; it wants — it wants — d—n me — it wants THAT' — throwing his hand over his head, and snapping his fingers.' Tom Moore's is the most exquisite warbling I ever heard. Next to him, David

Macculloch for Scotch songs. The last, when a boy at Dumfries, was much admired by Burns, who used to get him to try over the words which he composed to new melodies. He is brother to Macculloch of Ardwell.

November 22. — *Moore.* — I saw Moore (for the first time, I may say) this season. We had indeed met in public twenty years ago. There is a manly frankness, with perfect ease and good-breeding, about him which is delightful. Not the least touch of the poet or the pedant. A little — very little man. Less, I think, than Lewis, and something like him in person; God knows, not in conversation, for Matt, though a clever fellow, was a bore of the first description. Moreover, he looked always like a schoolboy. Now Moore has none of this insignificance. His countenance is plain, but the expression so very animated, especially in speaking or singing, that it is far more interesting than the finest features could have rendered it.

"I was aware that Byron had often spoken, both in private society and in his Journal, of Moore and myself, in the same breath, and with the same sort of regard; so I was curious to see what there could be in common betwixt us, Moore having lived so much in the gay world, I in the country, and with people of business, and sometimes with politicians; Moore a scholar, I none; he a musician and artist, I without knowledge of a note; he a democrat, I an aristocrat — with many other points of difference; besides his being an Irishman, I a Scotchman, and both tolerably national. Yet there is a point of resemblance, and a strong one. We are both good-humoured fellows, who rather seek to enjoy what is going forward than to maintain our dignity as Lions; and we have both seen the world too widely and too well not to contemn in our souls the imaginary consequence of literary people, who walk with their noses in the air, and remind me always of the fellow whom Johnson met in an alehouse, and who called himself '*the great Twalmly — inventor of the floodgate iron for smoothing linen.*' He also enjoys the *mot pour*

rire, and so do I. It was a pity that nothing save the total destruction of Byron's Memoirs would satisfy his executors. But there was a reason — *Premat Nox alta.* It would be a delightful addition to life, if T. M. had a cottage within two miles of one. We went to the theatre together, and the house being luckily a good one, received T. M. with rapture. I could have hugged them, for it paid back the debt of the kind reception I met with in Ireland.

"Here is matter for a May morning, but much fitter for a November one. The general distress in the city has affected H. & R., Constable's great agents. Should they *go*, it is not likely that Constable can stand, and such an event would lead to great distress and perplexity on the part of J. B. and myself. Thank God, I have enough to pay more than 20s. in the pound, taking matters at the very worst. But much inconvenience must be the consequence. I had a lesson in 1814 which should have done good; but success and abundance erased it from my mind. But this is no time for journalizing, or moralizing either. Necessity is like a sour-faced cook-maid, and I a turn-spit she has flogged, ere now, till he mounted his wheel. If Woodstock can be out by 25th January it will do much, and it is possible. Could not write to purpose for thick-coming fancies.

'My spinning-wheel is auld and stiff,
The rock o't winna stand, sir;
To keep the temper pin in tiff,
Employs aft my hand, sir.'

"Went to dine at the Lord Justice-Clerk's, as I thought by invitation, but it was for Tuesday se'ennight. Returned very well pleased, not being exactly in the humour for company, and had a beef-steak. My appetite is surely, excepting as to quantity, that of a farmer, for, eating moderately of anything, my epicurean pleasure is in the most simple diet. Wine I seldom taste when alone, and use instead a little spirits and water. I have of late diminished the quantity, for fear of a weakness inductive to a diabetes — a disease which broke up

my father's health, though one of the most temperate men who ever lived. I smoke a couple of cigars instead, which operates equally as a sedative —

'Just to drive the cold winter away,
And drown the fatigues of the day.'

I smoked a good deal about twenty years ago when at Ashestiel; but coming down one morning to the parlour, I found, as the room was small and confined, that the smell was unpleasant, and laid aside the use of the *Nicotian weed* for many years; but was again led to use it by the example of my son, a hussar officer, and my son-in-law, an Oxford student. I could lay it aside to-morrow; I laugh at the dominion of custom in this and many things.

'We make the giants first, and then — *do not* kill them.'

"*November* 23. — On comparing notes with Moore, I was confirmed in one or two points which I had always laid down in considering poor Byron. One was, that like Rousseau he was apt to be very suspicious, and a plain downright steadiness of manner was the true mode to maintain his good opinion. Will Rose told me, that once, while sitting with Byron, he fixed insensibly his eyes on his feet, one of which, it must be remembered was deformed. Looking up suddenly, he saw Byron regarding him with a look of concentrated and deep displeasure, which wore off when he observed no consciousness or embarrassment in the countenance of Rose. Murray afterwards explained this, by telling Rose that Lord Byron was very jealous of having this personal imperfection noticed or attended to. In another point, Moore confirmed my previous opinion, namely, that Byron loved mischief-making. Moore had written to him, cautioning him against the project of establishing the paper called the Liberal, in communion with men on whom he said the world had set its mark. Byron showed this to the parties. Shelley wrote a modest and rather affecting expostulation to Moore. These two peculiarities of extreme suspicion and love of mischief are both shades of the

malady which certainly tinctured some part of the character of this mighty genius; and without some tendency towards which, genius perhaps cannot exist to great extent. The wheels of a machine, to play rapidly, must not fit with the utmost exactness, else the attrition diminishes the impetus.

"Another of Byron's peculiarities was the love of mystifying, which, indeed, may be referred to that of mischief. There was no knowing how much or how little to believe of his narratives. Instance: — William Bankes expostulating with him upon a dedication which he had written in extravagant terms of praise to Cam Hobhouse, Byron told him that Cam had bored him about this dedication till he had said, 'Well, it shall be so, provided you will write it yourself;' and affirmed that Hobhouse did write the high-coloured dedication accordingly. I mentioned this to Murray, having the report from Will Rose, to whom Bankes had mentioned it. Murray, in reply, assured me that the dedication was written by Lord Byron himself, and showed it me in his own hand. I wrote to Rose to mention the thing to Bankes, as it might have made mischief had the story got into the circle. Byron was disposed to think all men of imagination were addicted to mix fiction (or poetry) in their prose. He used to say he dared believe the celebrated courtezan of Venice, about whom Rousseau makes so piquante a story, was, if one could see her, a draggle-tailed wench enough. I believe that he embellished his own amours considerably, and that he was, in many respects, *le fanfaron de vices qu'il n'avoit pas.* He loved to be thought woful, mysterious, and gloomy, and sometimes hinted at strange causes. I believe the whole to have been the creation and sport of a wild and powerful fancy. In the same manner he *crammed* people, as it is termed, about duels and the like, which never existed, or were much exaggerated.

"What I liked about Byron, besides his boundless genius, was his generosity of spirit as well as purse, and his utter contempt of all the affectations of literature, from the schoolmagisterial style to the lackadaisical. His example has formed a sort of upper house of poetry; — but

'There will be many peers
Ere such another Byron.'

"* * * Talking of Abbotsford, it begins to be haunted by too much company of every kind, but especially foreigners. I do not like them. I hate fine waistcoats, and breast-pins upon dirty shirts. I detest the impudence that pays a stranger compliments, and harangues about an author's works in his own house, which is surely ill-breeding. Moreover, they are seldom long of making it evident that they know nothing about what they are talking of, excepting having seen the Lady of the Lake at the opera.

"Dined at St. Catherine's * with the Lord Advocate, Lord Melville, Lord Justice-Clerk, Sir Archibald Campbell of Succoth, — all class companions, and acquainted well for more than forty years. All excepting Lord J. C. were at Fraser's class, High-School. Boyle joined us at college. There are, besides, Sir Adam Fergusson, Colin Mackenzie, James Hope, Dr. James Buchan, Claud Russell, and perhaps two or three more of and about the same period — but

'Apparent rari nantes in gurgite vasto.'

"*November 24th.* — Talking of strangers, London held, some four or five years since, one of those animals who are lions at first, but by transmutation of two seasons, become in regular course *bores* — Ugo Foscolo by name, a haunter of Murray's shop and of literary parties. Ugly as a baboon, and intolerably conceited, he spluttered, blustered, and disputed, without even knowing the principles upon which men of sense render a reason, and screamed all the while like a pig with a knife in his throat. Another such animalaccio is a brute of a Marquis de * * *, who lately inflicted two days on us at Abbotsford. These gentry never know what to make of themselves in the forenoon, but sit tormenting the women to play at proverbs and such trash.

* St. Catherine's, the seat of Sir William Rae, Bart., then Lord Advocate, is about three miles from Edinburgh.

"*Foreigner of a different caste.* There was lately at Abbotsford, and is here for education just now, a young Count Davidoff, with his tutor, Mr. Collyer. He is nephew of the famous Orloffs. It is quite surprising how much sense and sound thinking this youth has at the early age of sixteen, without the least self-conceit or forwardness. On the contrary, he seems kind, modest, and ingenuous.* To questions which I asked about the state of Russia, he answered with the precision and accuracy of twice his years. I should be sorry the saying were verified in him —

'So wise so young, they say, do ne'er live long.'†

I saw also at Abbotsford two Frenchmen whom I liked, friends of Miss Dumergue. One, called Le Noir, is the author of a tragedy which he had the grace never to quote, and which I, though poked by some malicious persons, had *not* the grace even to hint at. They were disposed at first to be complimentary, but I convinced them it was not the custom here, and they took it well, and were agreeable.

"A little bilious this morning, for the first time these six months. It cannot be the London matters which stick on my stomach, for that is mending, and may have good effects on myself and others.

"Dined with Robert Cockburn. Company, Lord Melville and family; Sir John and Lady Hope; Lord and Lady R. Kerr, and so forth. Combination of colliers general, and coals up to double price; the men will not work *although*, or rather *because* they can make from thirty to forty shillings per week. Lord R. Kerr told us he had a letter from Lord Forbes (son of Earl Granard, Ireland), that he was asleep in his house at Castle Forbes, when awakened by a sense of suffocation, which

* M. Davidoff has, in his mature life, amply justified Sir Walter's prognostications. He has, I understand, published in the Russian language, a tribute to the memory of Scott. But his Travels in Greece and Asia Minor are well known, and considered as in a high degree honourable to his taste and learning. — [1839.]

† *King Richard III.* Act. III. Scene 1.

deprived him of the power of stirring a limb, yet left him the consciousness that the house was on fire. At this moment, and while his apartment was in flames, his large dog jumped on the bed, seized his shirt, and dragged him to the staircase, where the fresh air restored his powers of existence and of escape. This is very different from most cases of preservation of life by the canine race, when the animal generally jumps into the water, in which element he has force and skill. That of fire is as hostile to him as to mankind.

"*November* 25. — Read Jeffrey's neat and well-intended address to the mechanics upon their combinations. Will it do good? Umph. It takes only the hand of a Lilliputian to light a fire, but would require the diuretic powers of Gulliver to extinguish it. The Whigs will live and die in the heresy that the world is ruled by little pamphlets and speeches, and that if you can sufficiently demonstrate that a line of conduct is most consistent with men's interest, you have therefore and thereby demonstrated that they will at length, after a few speeches on the subject, adopt it of course. In this case we should have no need of laws or churches, for I am sure there is no difficulty in proving that moral, regular, and steady habits, conduce to men's best interest, and that vice is not sin merely, but folly. But of these men, each has passions and prejudices, the gratification of which he prefers, not only to the general weal, but to that of himself as an individual. Under the action of these wayward impulses, a man drinks to-day, though he is sure of starving to-morrow; he murders to-morrow, though he is sure to be hanged on Wednesday; and people are so slow to believe that which makes against their own predominant passions, that mechanics will combine to raise the price for one week, though they destroy the manufacture forever. The best remedy seems to be the probable supply of labourers from other trades. Jeffrey proposes each mechanic shall learn some other trade than his own, and so have two strings to his bow. He does not consider the length of a double apprenticeship. To make a man a good weaver

and a good tailor, would require as much time as the patriarch served for his two wives. Each mechanic has, indeed, a second trade, for he can dig and do rustic work. Perhaps the best reason for breaking up the association will prove to be the expenditure of the money which they have been simple enough to levy from the industrious for the support of the idle. How much provision for the sick and the aged, the widow and the orphan, has been expended in the attempt to get wages which the manufacturer cannot afford them, at any possible chance of selling his commodity!

"I had a bad fall last night coming home. There were unfinished houses at the east end of Athole Crescent, and as I was on foot, I crossed the street to avoid the materials which lay about; but, deceived by the moonlight, I slipped ankle-deep into a sea of mud (honest earth and water, thank God), and fell on my hands. Never was there such a representative of *Wall* in Pyramus and Thisbe — I was absolutely rough-cast. Luckily Lady S. had retired when I came home; so I enjoyed my tub of water without either remonstrance or condolences. Cockburn's hospitality will get the benefit and renown of my downfall, and yet has no claim to it. In future, though, I must take my coach at night — a control on one's freedom, but it must be submitted to. I found a letter from Cadell, giving a cheering account of things in London. Their correspondent is getting into his strength. Three days ago I would have been contented to buy this *consola*, as Judy says,* dearer than by a dozen falls in the mud.

N. B. Within eight weeks after recording this graceful act of submission, I found I was unable to keep a carriage at all.

"Mrs. Coutts, with the Duke of St. Albans and Lady Charlotte Beauclerk, called to take leave of us. When at Abbotsford, his suit throve but coldly. She made me, I believe,

* This alludes to a strange old woman, keeper of a public-house among the Wicklow mountains, who, among a world of oddities, cut short every word ending in *tion*, by the omission of the termination, — *consola* for consolation — *bothera* for botheration, &c. &c. Lord Plunkett had taken care to parade Judy and all her peculiarities.

her confidant in sincerity. She had refused him twice, and decidedly: he was merely on the footing of friendship. I urged it was akin to love. She allowed she might marry the Duke, only she had at present not the least intention that way. Is this frank admission more favourable for the Duke than an absolute protestation against the possibility of such a marriage? I think not. It is the fashion to attend Mrs. Coutts's parties, and to abuse her. I have always found her a kind, friendly woman, without either affectation or insolence in the display of her wealth; most willing to do good, if the means be shown to her. She can be very entertaining, too, as she speaks without scruple of her stage life. So much wealth can hardly be enjoyed without some ostentation. But what then? If the Duke marries her, he ensures an immense fortune; if she marries him, she has the first rank. The disparity of ages concerns no one but themselves; so they have my consent to marry, if they can get each other's. Just as this is written, enter my Lord of St. Albans and Lady Charlotte, to beg I would recommend a book of sermons to Mrs. Coutts. Much obliged for her good opinion: recommended Logan's — one poet should always speak for another. The mission, I suppose, was a little display on the part of good Mrs. Coutts of authority over her high aristocratic suitor. I did not suspect her of turning *devotee*, and retract my consent as given above, unless she remains 'burly, brisk, and jolly.' Dined quiet with wife and daughter. Robert Cadell looked in in the evening on business.

"I here register my purpose to practice economics. I have little temptation to do otherwise. Abbotsford is all that I can make it, and too large for the property; so I resolve —

"No more building;

"No purchases of land, till times are quite safe;

"No buying books or expensive trifles — I mean to any extent; and

"Clearing off encumbrances, with the returns of this year's labour; —

"Which resolutions, with health and my habits of industry, will make me 'sleep in spite of thunder.'

"After all, it is hard that the vagabond stock-jobbing Jews should, for their own purposes, make such a shake of credit as now exists in London, and menace the credit of men trading on sure funds like Hurst and Robinson. It is just like a set of pick-pockets, who raise a mob; in which honest folks are knocked down and plundered, that they may pillage safely in the midst of the confusion they have excited.

"*November* 26. — The Court met late, and sat till *one;* detained from that hour till four o'clock, being engaged in the perplexed affairs of Mr. James Stewart of Brugh. This young gentleman is heir to a property of better than £1000 a-year in Orkney. His mother married very young, and was wife, mother, and widow, in the course of the first year. Being unfortunately under the direction of a careless agent, she was unlucky enough to embarrass her affairs. I was asked to accept the situation of one of the son's curators; and trust to clear out his affairs and hers — at least I will not fail for want of application. I have lent her £300 on a second (and therefore doubtful) security over her house in Newington, bought for £1000, and on which £600 is already secured. I have no connexion with the family except that of compassion, and may not be rewarded even by thanks when the young man comes of age. I have known my father often so treated by those whom he had laboured to serve. But if we do not run some hazard in our attempts to do good, where is the merit of them? So I will bring through my Orkney laird if I can. Dined at home quiet with Lady S. and Anne.

I was obliged to give this up in consequence of my own misfortunes.

"*November* 28. — People make me the oddest requests. It is not unusual for an Oxonian or Cantab, who has outrun his allowance, and of whom I know nothing, to apply to me for the loan of £20, £50, or £100. A captain of the Danish

naval service writes to me, that being in distress for a sum of money by which he might transport himself to Columbia to offer his services in assisting to free that province, he had dreamed I generously made him a present of it. I can tell him his dream by contraries. I begin to find, like Joseph Surface, that too good a character is inconvenient. I don't know what I have done to gain so much credit for generosity, but I suspect I owe it to being supposed, as Puff says, one of 'those whom Heaven has blessed with affluence.' Not too much of that neither, my dear petitioners, though I may thank myself that your ideas are not correct.

"Dined at Melville Castle, whither I went through a snow-storm. I was glad to find myself once more in a place connected with many happy days. Met Sir R. Dundas and my old friend George, now Lord Abercromby, with his Lady, and a beautiful girl, his daughter. He is what he always was, the best-humoured man living; and our meetings, now more rare than formerly, are seasoned with many a recollection of old frolics and old friends. I am entertained to see him just the same he has always been, never yielding up his own opinion in fact, and yet in words acquiescing in all that could be said against it. George was always like a willow — he never offered resistance to the breath of argument, but never moved from his rooted opinion, blow as it listed. Exaggeration might make these peculiarities highly dramatic: Conceive a man who always seems to be acquiescing in your sentiments, yet never changes his own, and this with a sort of *bonhommie* which shows there is not a particle of deceit intended. He is only desirous to spare you the trouble of contradiction.

"*November* 29. — Dined at Justice-Clerk's — the President — Captain Smollett of Bonhill — our new Commander-in-Chief, Hon. Sir Robert O'Callaghan, brother to Earl of Lismore, a fine soldier-like man, with orders and badges; — also his younger brother, an agreeable man, whom I met at Lowther Castle this season. He composes his own music and sings his own poetry — has much humour, enhanced by a strong

touch of national dialect, which is always a rich sauce to an Irishman's good things. Dandyish, but not offensively; and seems to have a warm feeling for the credit of his country — rather inconsistent with the trifling and selfish quietude of a mere man of society.

"*November* 30. — I am come to the time when 'those that look out of the windows shall be darkened.' I must now wear spectacles constantly in reading and writing, though till this winter I have made a shift by using only their occasional assistance. Although my health cannot be better, I feel my lameness becomes sometimes painful, and often inconvenient. Walking on the pavement or causeway gives me trouble, and I am glad when I have accomplished my return on foot from the Parliament House to Castle Street, though I can (taking a competent time, as old *Braxie* said on another occasion) walk five or six miles in the country with pleasure. Well, such things must come, and be received with cheerful submission. My early lameness considered, it was impossible for a man to have been stronger or more active than I have been, and that for twenty or thirty years. Seams will slit, and elbows will out, quoth the tailor; and as I was fifty-four 15th August last, my mortal vestments are none of the newest. Then Walter, Charles, and Lockhart, are as active and handsome young fellows as you can see; and while they enjoy strength and activity, I can hardly be said to want it. I have perhaps all my life set an undue value on these gifts. Yet it does appear to me that high and independent feelings are naturally, though not uniformly or inseparably, connected with bodily advantages. Strong men are usually good-humoured, and active men often display the same elasticity of mind as of body. These superiorities, indeed, are often misused. But, even for these things, God shall call us to judgment.

"Some months since, I joined with other literary folks in subscribing a petition for a pension to Mrs. Grant of Laggan, which we thought was a tribute merited by her as an authoress; and, in my opinion, much more by the firmness and elas-

ticity of mind with which she had borne a succession of great domestic calamities. Unhappily there was only about £100 open on the pension list, and this the ministers assigned in equal portions to Mrs. G—— and a distressed lady, granddaughter of a forfeited Scottish nobleman. Mrs. G——, proud as a Highland-woman, vain as a poetess, and absurd as a blue-stocking, has taken this partition in *malam partem*, and written to Lord Melville about her merits, and that her friends do not consider her claims as being fairly canvassed, with something like a demand that her petition be submitted to the King. This is not the way to make her *plack* a *bawbee*, and Lord M., a little *miffed* in turn, sends the whole correspondence to me, to know whether Mrs. G—— will accept the £50 or not. Now, hating to deal with ladies when they are in an unreasonable humour, I have got the good-humoured Man of Feeling to find out the lady's mind, and I take on myself the task of making her peace with Lord M. There is no great doubt how it will end, for your scornful dog will always eat your dirty pudding. After all, the poor lady is greatly to be pitied; — her sole remaining daughter deep and far gone in a decline.

"Dined with my cousin, Robert Rutherford, being the first invitation since my uncle's death, and our cousin, Lieutenant-Colonel Russell * of Ashestiel, with his sister Anne — the former newly returned from India — a fine gallant fellow, and distinguished as a cavalry officer. He came over-land from India, and has observed a good deal. Knight Marischal not well, so unable to attend the convocation of kith and kin.

"*December* 1*st.* — Colonel Russell told me that the European Government had discovered an ingenious mode of diminishing the number of burnings of widows. It seems the Shaster positively enjoins that the pile shall be so constructed that, if the victim should repent even at the moment when it is set on fire, she may still have the means of saving herself.

* Now Major-General Sir James Russell, K. C. B.

The Brahmins soon found it was necessary to assist the resolution of the sufferers, by means of a little pit into which they contrive to let the poor widow sink, so as to prevent her reaping any benefit from a late repentance. But the Government has brought them back to the regard of this law, and only permit the burning to go on when the pile is constructed with full opportunity of a *locus penitentiæ*. Yet the widow is so degraded if she dare to survive, that the number of burnings is still great. The quantity of female children destroyed by the Rajapout tribes, Colonel R. describes as very great indeed. They are strangled by the mother. The principle is the aristocratic pride of these high castes, who breed up no more daughters than they can reasonably hope to find matches for in their own rank. Singular how artificial systems of feeling can be made to overcome that love of offspring which seems instinctive in the females, not of the human race only, but of the lower animals. This is the reverse of our system of increasing game by shooting the old cock birds. It is a system would aid Malthus rarely.

"I think this journal will suit me well: if I can wax myself into an idea that it is purely voluntary, it may go on — *nulla dies sine lineâ*. But never a being hated task-work as I hate it, from my infancy upwards, and yet I have done a great deal in my day. It is not that I am idle in my nature neither. But propose to me to do one thing, and it is inconceivable the desire I have to do something else — not that it is more easy or more pleasant, but just because it is escaping from an imposed task. I cannot trace this love of contradiction to any distinct source, but it has haunted me all my life. I could almost suppose it was mechanical, and that the imposition of a piece of duty-labour operated on me like the mace of a bad billiard player, which gives an impulse to the ball indeed, but sends it off at a tangent different from the course designed. Now, if I expend such eccentric movements on this journal, it will be turning a wretched propensity to some tolerable account. If I had thus employed the hours and half hours which I have whiled away in putting off something that must needs

be done at last, my conscience! I should have had a journal with a witness. Sophia and Lockhart came to Edinburgh to-day, and dined with us, meeting Hector Macdonald Buchanan, his Lady, and Missie, James Skene and his Lady, Lockhart's friend Cay, &c. They are lucky to be able to assemble so many real friends, whose good wishes I am sure will follow them in their new undertaking.

"*December* 2. — Rather a blank day for the *Gurnal*. Sophia dined with us alone, Lockhart being gone to the west to bid farewell to his father and brothers. Evening spent in talking with Sophia on their future prospects. God bless her, poor girl, she never gave me a moment's reason to complain of her. But, O my God, that poor delicate child, so clever, so animated, yet holding by this earth with so fearfully slight a tenure! Never out of his mother's thoughts, almost never out of his father's arms when he has but a single moment to give to anything. *Deus providebit.*

"*December* 3. — T. S. called last night to excuse himself from dining with Lockhart's friends to-day. I really fear he is near an actual stand-still. He has been extremely improvident. When I first knew him he had an excellent estate, and now he is deprived, I fear, of the whole reversion of the price, and this from no vice or extreme, except a wasteful mode of buying pictures and other costly trifles at high prices, and selling them again for nothing, besides extravagant housekeeping and profuse hospitality. An excellent disposition, with a considerable fund of acquired knowledge, would have rendered him an agreeable companion, had he not affected singularity, and rendered himself accordingly singularly affected. He was very near being a poet, but a miss is as good as a mile. I knew him first, many years ago, when he was desirous of my acquaintance; but he was too poetical for me, or I was not poetical enough for him, so that we continued only ordinary acquaintance, with good-will on either side, which T. S. really deserves, as a more friendly generous creature never lived.

Lockhart hopes to get something done for him, being sincerely attached to him, but says he has no hopes till he is utterly ruined. That point, I fear, is not far distant; but what Lockhart can do for him *then*, I cannot guess. His last effort failed, owing to a curious reason. T. S. had made some translations, which he does extremely well — for give him ideas, and he never wants choice of good words — and Lockhart had got Constable to offer some sort of terms for them. T. S. had always, though possessing a beautiful power of handwriting, had some whim or other about imitating that of some other person, and has written for months in the imitation of one or other of his friends. At present he has renounced this amusement, and chooses to write with a brush upon large cartridge paper, somewhat in the Chinese fashion, — so when his work, which was only to extend to one or two volumes, arrived on the shoulders of two porters, in immense bales, our jolly bibliopole backed out of the treaty, and would have nothing more to do with T. S. He is a creature that is, or would be thought, of imagination all compact, and is influenced by strange whims. But he is a kind, harmless, friendly soul, and I fear has been cruelly plundered of money, which he now wants sadly.

"Dined with Lockhart's friends, about fifty in number, who gave him a parting entertainment: John Hope, Solicitor-General, in the chair, and Robert Dundas, croupier. The company most highly respectable, and any man might be proud of such an indication of the interest they take in his progress in life. Tory principles rather too violently upheld by some speakers. I came home about ten; the party sat late.

"*December 5th.* — This morning Lockhart and Sophia left us early, and without leave-taking; when I rose at eight o'clock, they were *gone*. This was very right. I hate red eyes and blowing of noses. *Agere et pati Romanum est.* Of all schools, commend me to the Stoics. We cannot indeed overcome our affections, nor ought we if we could, but we may

repress them within due bounds, and avoid coaxing them to make fools of those who should be their masters. I have lost some of the comforts to which I chiefly looked for enjoyment. Well, I must make the more of such as remain — God bless them. And so 'I will unto my holy work again,'* which at present is the description of that worshipful triumvirate, Danton, Robespierre, and Marat.

"I cannot conceive what possesses me, over every person besides, to mislay papers. I received a letter Saturday at *e'en*, inclosing a bill for £750; *no deaf nuts*. Well, I read it, and note the contents; and this day, as if it had been a wind-bill in the literal sense of the words, I search everywhere, and lose three hours of my morning — turn over all my confusion in the writing-desk — break open one or two letters, lest I should have enclosed the sweet and quickly convertible document in them, — send for a joiner, and disorganize my scrutoire, lest it should have fallen aside by mistake. I find it at last — the place where is of little consequence; but this trick must be amended.

"Dined at the Royal Society Club, where, as usual, was a pleasant meeting — from twenty to twenty-five. It is a very good institution; we pay two guineas only for six dinners in the year, present or absent. Dine at five, or rather half-past five, at the Royal Hotel, where we have an excellent dinner, with soups, fish, &c., and all in good order; port and sherry till half-past seven, then coffee, and we go to the Society. This preface of a good dinner, to be paid for whether you partake or not, brings out many a philosopher who might not otherwise have attended. Harry Mackenzie, now in his eighty-second or third year, read part of an Essay on Dreams. Supped at Dr. Russell's usual party, which shall serve for one while.

"*December 6th.* — A rare thing this literature, or love of fame or notoriety which accompanies it. Here is Mr. Henry Mackenzie on the very brink of human dissolution, as actively

* *King Richard III.* Act. III. Scene 7.

anxious about it as if the curtain must not soon be closed on that and everything else.* He calls me his literary confessor; and I am sure I am glad to return the kindnesses which he showed me long since in George Square. No man is less known from his writings. You would suppose a retired, modest, somewhat affected man, with a white handkerchief, and a sigh ready for every sentiment. No such thing: H. M. is alert as a contracting tailor's needle in every sort of business — a politician and a sportsman — shoots and fishes in a sort even to this day — and is the life of company with anecdotes and fun. Sometimes his daughter tells me he is in low spirits at home, but really I never see anything of it in society.

"There is a maxim almost universal in Scotland, which I should like much to see controlled. Every youth, of every temper and almost every description of character, is sent either to study for the bar, or to a writer's office as an apprentice. The Scottish seem to conceive Themis the most powerful of goddesses. Is a lad stupid, the law will sharpen him; — is he mercurial, the law will make him sedate; — has he an estate, he may get a sheriffdom; — is he poor, the richest lawyers have emerged from poverty; — is he a Tory, he may become a depute-advocate; — is he a Whig, he may with far better hope expect to become, in reputation at least, that rising counsel Mr. ——, when in fact he only rises at tavern dinners. Upon some such wild views, advocates and writers multiply till there is no life for them, and men give up the chase, hopeless and exhausted, and go into the army at five-and-twenty, instead of eighteen, with a turn for expense perhaps — almost certainly for profligacy, and with a heart embittered against the loving parents or friends who compelled them to lose six or seven years in dusting the rails of the stair with their black gowns, or scribbling nonsense for twopence a page all day, and laying out twice their earnings at night in whisky-punch. Here is T. L. now. Four or five years ago, from certain indications, I assured his friends he would never be a writer.

* Mr. Mackenzie had been consulting Sir Walter about collecting his own juvenile poetry.

Good-natured lad, too, when Bacchus is out of the question; but at other times so pugnacious, that it was wished he could only be properly placed where fighting was to be a part of his duty, regulated by time and place, and paid for accordingly. Well, time and instruction have been thrown away, and now, after fighting two regular boxing-matches and a duel with pistols in the course of one week, he tells them roundly *he will be no writer*, which common-sense might have told them before. He has now perhaps acquired habits of insubordination, unfitting him for the army, where he might have been tamed at an earlier period. He is too old for the navy, and so he must go to India, a guinea-pig on board a Chinaman, with what hope or view it is melancholy to guess. His elder brother did all man could to get his friends to consent to his going into the army in time. The lad has good-humour, courage, and most gentlemanlike feelings, but he is incurably dissipated, I fear; so goes to die in a foreign land. Thank God, I let Walter take his own way; and I trust he will be a useful, honoured soldier, being, for his time, high in the service; whereas at home he would probably have been a wine-bibbing, moor-fowl shooting, fox-hunting Fife squire — living at Lochore without either aim or end — and well if he were no worse. Dined at home with Lady S. and Anne. Wrote in the evening.

"*December 7th.* — Teind day — at home of course. Wrote answers to one or two letters which have been lying on my desk like snakes, hissing at me for my dilatoriness. Received a letter from Sir W. Knighton, mentioning that the King acquiesced in my proposal that Constable's Miscellany should be dedicated to him. Enjoined, however, not to make this public, till the draft of dedication shall be approved. This letter tarried so long, I thought some one had insinuated the proposal was *infra dig.* I don't think so. The purpose is to bring all the standard works, both in sciences and the liberal arts, within the reach of the lower classes, and enable them thus to use with advantage the education which is given them at every

hand. To make boys learn to read, and then place no good books within their reach, is to give men an appetite, and leave nothing in the pantry save unwholesome and poisonous food, which, depend upon it, they will eat rather than starve. Sir William, it seems, has been in Germany.

"Mighty dark this morning: it is past ten, and I am using my lamp. The vast number of houses built beneath us to the north certainly renders our street darker during the days in which frost or haze prevents the smoke from rising. After all, it may be my older eyes. I remember two years ago, when Lord Hermand began to fail somewhat in his limbs, he observed that Lord Succoth came to court at a more early hour than usual, whereas it was he himself who took longer time to walk the usual distance betwixt his house and the Parliament Square. I suspect old gentlemen often make these mistakes.

"Dined quiet with Lady S—— and Anne. Anne is practising Scots songs, which I take as a kind compliment to my own taste, as hers leads her chiefly to foreign music. I think the good girl sees that I want and must miss her sister's peculiar talent in singing the airs of our native country, which, imperfect as my musical ear is, make, and always have made, the most pleasing impression on me. And so if she puts a constraint on herself for my sake, I can only say, in requital, God bless her.

"I have much to comfort me in the present aspect of my family. My eldest son, independent in fortune, united to an affectionate wife — and of good hopes in his profession; — my second, with a good deal of talent, and in the way, I trust, of cultivating it to good purpose; — Anne, an honest, downright good Scots lass, in whom I could only wish to correct a spirit of satire; — and Lockhart is Lockhart, to whom I can most willingly confide the happiness of the daughter who chose him, and whom he has chosen. But my dear wife, the partner of early cares and successes is, I fear, frail in health — though I trust and pray she may see me out. Indeed, if this troublesome complaint goes on — it bodes no long existence. My

brother was affected with the same weakness, which, before he was fifty, brought on mortal symptoms. The poor Major had been rather a free liver. But my father, the most abstemious of men, save when the duties of hospitality required him to be very moderately free with his bottle, and that was very seldom, had the same weakness of the powers of retention which now annoys me, and he, I think, was not above seventy when cut off. Square the odds, and good-night Sir Walter about sixty. — I care not, if I leave my name unstained, and my family properly settled — *Sat est vixisse.*

"*December* 8. — Talking of the *vixisse*, it may not be impertinent to notice that Knox, a young poet of considerable talent, died here a week or two since. His father was a respectable yeoman, and he himself, succeeding to good farms under the Duke of Buccleuch, became too soon his own master, and plunged into dissipation and ruin. His talent then showed itself in a fine strain of pensive poetry, called, I think, 'The Lonely Hearth,' * far superior to that of Michael Bruce, whose *consumption*, by the way, has been the *life* of his verses. But poetry, nay good poetry, is a drug in the present day. I am a wretched patron — I cannot go about with a subscription-paper, like a pocket-pistol, and draw unawares on some honest country-gentleman, who has as much alarm as if I had used the phrase 'stand and deliver,' and parts with his money with a grimace, indicating some suspicion that the crown-piece thus levied goes ultimately into the collector's own pocket. This I see daily done; and I have seen such collectors, when they have exhausted papa and mamma, continue their trade among the misses, and conjure out of their pockets their little funds which should carry them to a play or an assembly. It is well people will go through this

* William Knox died 12th November. He had published *Songs of Israel*, 1824; *A Visit to Dublin*, 1824; *The Harp of Zion*, 1825, &c.; besides the *Lonely Hearth*. His publisher (Mr. Anderson junior, of Edinburgh) remembers that Sir Walter occasionally wrote to Knox, and sent him money — £10 at a time.

— it does some good, I suppose, and they have great merit who can sacrifice their pride so far as to attempt it in this way. For my part I am a bad promoter of subscriptions; but I wished to do what I could for this lad, whose talent I really admired; and I am not addicted to admire heaven-born poets, or poetry that is reckoned very good *considering*. I had him, Knox, at Abbotsford, about ten years ago, but found him unfit for that sort of society. I tried to help him, but there were temptations he could never resist. He scrambled on writing for the booksellers and magazines, and living like the Otways, and Savages, and Chattertons, of former days, though I do not know that he was in extreme want. His connexion with me terminated in begging a subscription or a guinea, now and then. His last works were spiritual hymns, and which he wrote very well. In his own line of society he was said to exhibit infinite humour; but all his works are grave and pensive — a style, perhaps, like Master Stephen's melancholy, affected for the nonce.

"Mrs. Grant intimates that she will take her pudding — her pension, I mean (see 30th November), and is contrite, as Henry Mackenzie vouches. I am glad the stout old girl is not foreclosed, faith. Cabbing a pension in these times is like hunting a pig with a soap'd tail, monstrous apt to slip through your fingers.

"*December* 9. — Yesterday I read and wrote the whole day and evening. To-day I shall not be so happy. Having Gas-Light Company to attend at two, I must be brief in journalizing.

"The gay world has been kept in hot water lately by the impudent publication of the celebrated Harriet Wilson — who, punk from earliest possibility, I suppose, has lived with half the gay world at hack and manger, and now obliges such as will not pay hush-money with a history of whatever she knows or can invent about them. She must have been assisted in the style, spelling, and diction, though the attempt at wit is very poor, that at pathos sickening. But there is

some good retailing of conversations, in which the style of the speakers, so far as known to me, is exactly imitated, and some things told, as said by individuals of each other, which will sound unpleasantly in each other's ears. I admire the address of Lord A——, himself very sorrily handled from time to time. Some one asked him if H. W. had been pretty correct on the whole. 'Why, faith,' he replied, 'I believe so' — when, raising his eyes, he saw Q—— D——, whom the little jilt had treated atrociously — 'what concerns the present company always excepted, you know,' added Lord A——, with infinite presence of mind. As he was in *pari casu* with Q. D., no more could be said. After all, H. W. beats Con Philips, Anne Bellamy, and all former demireps, out and out. I think I supped once in her company, more than twenty years since, at Mat Lewis's in Argyle Street, where the company, as the Duke says to Lucio, chanced to be 'fairer than honest.'* She was far from beautiful, if it be the same *chiffonne*, but a smart saucy girl, with good eyes and dark hair, and the manners of a wild schoolboy. I am glad this accidental meeting has escaped her memory — or, perhaps, is not accurately recorded in mine — for being a sort of French falconer, who hawk at all they see, I might have had a distinction which I am far from desiring.

"Dined at Sir John Hay's — a large party. In the morning a meeting of Oil Gas Committee. The concern hangs a little;

> 'It may do weel, for aught it's done yet,
> But only — it's no just begun yet.' †

"*December* 10. — A stormy and rainy day. — Walk it from the Court through the rain. I don't dislike this. Egad, I rather like it; for no man that ever stepped on heather has less dread than I of the catch cold; and I seem to regain, in buffeting with the wind, a little of the high spirit with which,

* *Measure for Measure*, Act IV. Scene 3.

† Burns's *Dedication to Gavin Hamilton.*

in younger days, I used to enjoy a Tam o' Shanter ride through darkness, wind, and rain, the boughs groaning and cracking over my head, the good horse free to the road and impatient for home, and feeling the weather as little as I did.

'The storm around might roar and rustle,
We did na mind the storm a whistle.'

"Answered two letters: one, answer to a schoolboy, who writes himself Captain of Giggleswick School (a most imposing title), entreating the youngster not to commence editor of a magazine to be entitled the Yorkshire Muffin, I think, at seventeen years old — second, to a soldier of the 79th, showing why I cannot oblige him by getting his discharge, and exhorting him rather to bear with the wickedness and profanity of the service, than take the very precarious step of desertion. This is the old receipt of Durandarte — *Patience, cousin, and shuffle the cards;* and I suppose the correspondents will think I have been too busy in offering my counsel where I was asked for assistance.

"A third rogue writes to tell me — rather of the latest, if the matter was of consequence — that he approves of the first three volumes of the Heart of Mid-Lothian, but totally condemns the fourth. Doubtless he thinks his opinion worth the sevenpence sterling which his letter costs. However, an author should be reasonably well pleased when three-fourths of his work are acceptable to the reader. The knave demands of me, in a postscript, to get back the sword of Sir William Wallace from England, where it was carried from Dumbarton Castle. I am not Master-General of the Ordnance, that I know. It was wrong, however, to take away that and Mons Meg. If I go to London this spring, I will renew my negotiation with the Great Duke for recovery of Mons Meg.

"There is nothing more awful than to attempt to cast a glance among the clouds and mists which hide the broken extremity of the celebrated bridge of Mirza.* Yet, when every day brings us nigher that termination, one would almost think

* *Spectator*, No. 159.

our views should become clearer. Alas! it is not so: there is a curtain to be withdrawn, a veil to be rent, before we shall see things as they really are. There are few, I trust, who disbelieve the existence of a God; nay, I doubt if at all times, and in all moods, any single individual ever adopted that hideous creed, though some have professed it. With the belief of a Deity, that of the immortality of the soul and of the state of future rewards and punishments is indissolubly linked. More we are not to know; but neither are we prohibited from all attempts, however vain, to pierce the solemn sacred gloom. The expressions used in Scripture are doubtless metaphorical, — for penal fires and heavenly melody are only applicable to beings endowed with corporeal senses; and, at least till the period of the resurrection, the spirits of men, whether entering into the perfection of the just, or committed to the regions of punishment, are not connected with bodies. Neither is it to be supposed that the glorified bodies which shall arise in the last day will be capable of the same gross indulgences with which ours are now solaced. That the idea of Mahomet's paradise is inconsistent with the purity of our heavenly religion will be readily granted; and see Mark xii. 25. Harmony is obviously chosen as the least corporeal of all gratifications of the sense, and as the type of love, unity, and a state of peace and perfect happiness. But they have a poor idea of the Deity, and the rewards which are destined for the just made perfect, who can only adopt the literal sense of an eternal concert — a never-ending birth-day ode. I rather suppose this should be understood as some commission from the Highest, some duty to discharge with the applause of a satisfied conscience. That the Deity, who himself must be supposed to feel love and affection for the beings he has called into existence, should delegate a portion of those powers, I for one cannot conceive altogether so wrong a conjecture. We would then find reality in Milton's sublime machinery of the guardian saints or genii of kingdoms. Nay, we would approach to the Catholic idea of the employment of saints, though without approaching the absurdity of saint-worship,

which degrades their religion. There would be, we must suppose, in these employments difficulties to overcome, and exertions to be made, for all which the celestial beings employed would have certain appropriate powers. I cannot help owning that a life of active benevolence is more consistent with my ideas than an eternity of music. But it is all speculation, and it is impossible to guess what we shall do, unless we could ascertain the equally difficult previous question, what we are to be. But there is a God, and a just God — a judgment and a future life — and all who own so much, let them act according to the faith that is in them. I would not, of course, limit the range of my genii to this confined earth. There is the universe, with all its endless extent of worlds.

" Company at home — Sir Adam Fergusson and his Lady; Colonel and Miss Russell; Count Davidoff, and Mr. Collyer. By the by, I observe that all men whose names are obviously derived from some mechanical trade, endeavour to disguise and antiquate, as it were, their names, by spelling them after some quaint manner or other. Thus we have Collyer, Smythe, Tailleure; as much as to say, my ancestor was indeed a mechanic, but it was a world of time ago, when the word was spelled very unlike the modern usage. — Then we had young Whitebank and Will Allan the artist, a very agreeable, simple-mannered, and pleasant man.

" *December* 11. — A touch of the *morbus eruditorum*, to which I am as little subject as most folks, and have it less now than when young. It is a tremor of the head, the pulsation of which becomes painfully sensible — a disposition to causeless alarm — much lassitude — and decay of vigour and activity of intellect. The reins feel weary and painful, and the mind is apt to receive and encourage gloomy apprehensions. Fighting with this fiend is not always the best way to conquer him. I have found exercise and the open air better than reasoning. But such weather as is now without doors does not encourage *la petite guerre*, so we must give him battle in form, by letting both mind and body know that, supposing one the

House of Commons and the other the House of Peers, my will is sovereign over both. There is a fine description of this species of mental weakness in the fine play of Beaumont and Fletcher, called the *Lover's Progress*, where the man, warned that his death is approaching, works himself into an agony of fear, and calls for assistance, though there is no apparent danger. The apparition of the innkeeper's ghost, in the same play, hovers between the ludicrous and the terrible; and to me the touches of the former quality which it contains, seem to augment the effect of the latter — they seem to give reality to the supernatural, as being a circumstance with which an inventor would hardly have garnished his story.

"*December* 12. — Hogg came to breakfast this morning, and brought for his companion the Galashiels bard, David Thomson,* as to a meeting of *huz Tividale poets*. The honest grunter opines, with a delightful *naïveté*, that *Muir's* verses are far owre sweet — answered by Thomson that Moore's ear or notes, I forget which, were finely strung. 'They are far owre finely strung,' replied he of the Forest, 'for mine are just right.' It reminded me of Queen Bess, when questioning Melville sharply and closely whether Mary was taller than her, and extracting an answer in the affirmative, she replied — 'Then your Queen is too tall, for I am just the proper height.'

"Was engaged the whole day with Sheriff-court processes. There is something sickening in seeing poor devils drawn into great expenses about trifles by interested attorneys. But too cheap access to litigation has its evils on the other hand, for the proneness of the lower class to gratify spite and revenge in this way would be a dreadful evil were they able to endure the expense. Very few cases come before the Sheriff-court of Selkirkshire that ought to come anywhere. Wretched wranglings about a few pounds, begun in spleen, and carried on from obstinacy, and at length, from fear of the conclusion to the banquet of ill-humour, 'D—n—n of expenses.'† I try

* See *ante*, Vol. VI. p. 252.

† Burns's *Address to the Unco Guid.*

to check it as well as I can; 'but so't will be when I am gone.'

"*December* 12. — Dined at home, and spent the evening in writing — Anne and Lady Scott at the theatre to see Mathews; — a very clever man my friend Mathews; but it is tiresome to be funny for a whole evening, so I was content and stupid at home.

"An odd optical delusion has amused me these two last nights. I have been of late, for the first time, condemned to the constant use of spectacles. Now, when I have laid them aside to step into a room dimly lighted, out of the strong light which I use for writing, I have seen, or seemed to see, through the rims of the same spectacles which I have left behind me. At first the impression was so lively, that I put my hands to my eyes, believing I had the actual spectacles on at the moment. But what I saw was only the eidolon or image of said useful servants. This fortifies some of Dr. Hibbert's positions about spectral appearances.

"*December* 13. — Letter from Lady Stafford — kind and friendly, after the wont of Banzu-Mohr-ar-chat.* This is wrong spelled, I know. Her countenance is something for Sophia, whose company should be, as ladies are said to choose their liquor — little and good. To be acquainted with persons of mere *ton*, is a nuisance and a scrape — to be known to persons of real fashion and fortune, is in London a very great advantage. In London, second-rate fashion is like false jewels.

"Went to the yearly court of the Edinburgh Assurance Company, to which I am one of those graceful and useless

* *Banamhorar-Chat, i. e.* the Great Lady of the Cat, is the Gaelic title of the Duchess-Countess of Sutherland. The County of Sutherland itself is in that dialect *Cattey*, and in the English name of the neighbouring one, *Caithness*, we have another trace of the early settlement of the *Clan Chattan;* whose chiefs bear the cognizance of a Wild Cat. [The Duchess-Countess died in 1838.]

appendages, called Directors Extraordinary — an extraordinary director I should prove, had they elected me an ordinary one. There were there moneyers and great oneyers,* men of metal — counters and discounters — sharp, grim, prudential faces — eyes weak with ciphering by lamp-light — men who say to gold, Be thou paper, and to paper, Be thou turned into fine gold. Many a bustling, sharp-faced, keen-eyed writer too — some perhaps speculating with their clients' property. My reverend seigniors had expected a motion for printing their contract, which I, as a piece of light artillery, was brought down and got into battery to oppose. I should certainly have done this on the general ground, that while each person could at any time obtain sight of the contract at a call on the directors or managers, it would be absurd to print it for the use of the company — and that exposing it to the eyes of the world at large was in all respects unnecessary, and might teach novel companies to avail themselves of our rules and calculations — if false, for the purpose of exposing our errors — if correct, for the purpose of improving their own schemes on our model. But my eloquence was not required, no one renewing the motion under question; so off I came, my ears still ringing with the sounds of thousands and tens of thousands, and my eyes dazzled with the golden gleam offered by so many capitalists.

"Walked home with the Solicitor† — decidedly the most hopeful young man of his time; high connexions, great talent, spirited ambition, a ready elocution, with a good voice and dignified manners, prompt and steady courage, vigilant and constant assiduity, popularity with the young men, and the good opinion of the old, will, if I mistake not, carry him as high as any man who has arisen here since the days of old Hal Dundas‡ He is hot though, and rather hasty: this should be amended. They who would play at single-stick must bear

* See 1*st King Henry IV.* Act II. Scene 1.

† John Hope, Esq. (now Dean of the Faculty of Advocates) was at this time Solicitor-General for Scotland.

‡ Henry Dundas, the first Viscount Melville, first appeared in Parliament as Lord Advocate of Scotland.

with pleasure a rap over the knuckles. Dined quietly with Lady Scott and Anne.

"*December* 14. — Affairs very bad again in the money-market in London. It must come here, and I have far too many engagements not to feel it. To end the matter at once, I intend to borrow £10,000, with which my son's marriage-contract allows me to charge my estate. This will enable us to dispense in a great measure with bank assistance, and sleep in spite of thunder. I do not know why it is — this business makes me a little bilious, or rather the want of exercise during the Session, and this late change of the weather to too much heat. But the sun and moon shall dance on the green ere carelessness or hope of gain, or facility of getting cash, shall make me go too deep again, were it but for the disquiet of the thing.

"*December* 15. — Dined at home with family. I am determined not to stand mine host to all Scotland and England as I have done. This shall be a saving, as it must be a borrowing year. We heard from Sophia; they are got safe to town; but as Johnnie had a little bag of meal with him, to make his porridge on the road, the whole inn-yard assembled to see the operation. Junor, his maid, was of opinion that England was an 'awfu' country to make parritch in.' God bless the poor baby, and restore his perfect health!

"*December* 16. — T. S. and his friend Robert Wilson * came — the former at four, as usual — the latter at three, as appointed. Robert Wilson frankly said that T. S.'s case was quite desperate, that he was insolvent, and that any attempt to save him at present would be just so much cash thrown away. God knows, at this moment I have none to throw away uselessly. For poor S., there was a melancholy mixture of pathos and affectation in his statement, which really affected

* Robert Sym Wilson, Esq., W. S., Secretary to the Royal Bank of Scotland.

me; while it told me that it would be useless to help him to money on such very empty plans. I endeavoured to persuade him to make a virtue of necessity, resign all to his creditors, and begin the world on a new leaf. I offered him Chiefswood for a temporary retirement. Lady Scott thinks I was wrong, and nobody could less desire such a neighbour, all his affectations being *caviare* to me. But then the wife and children! — Went again to the Solicitor on a wrong night, being asked for to-morrow. Lady Scott undertakes to keep my engagements recorded in future. 'Sed quis custodiet ipsam custodem?'

"*December* 17. — Dined with the Solicitor — Lord Chief-Baron — Sir William Boothby, nephew of old Sir Brook, the dandy poet, &c. Annoyed with anxious presentiments, which the night's post must dispel or confirm.

"*December* 18. — Poor T. S. called again yesterday. Through his incoherent, miserable tale, I could see that he had exhausted each access to credit, and yet fondly imagines that, bereft of all his accustomed indulgences, he can work with a literary zeal unknown to his happier days. I hope he may labour enough to gain the mere support of his family. For myself, if things go badly in London, the magic wand of the Unknown will be shivered in his grasp. He must then, faith, be termed the Too-well-known. The feast of fancy will be over with the feeling of independence. He shall no longer have the delight of waking in the morning with bright ideas in his mind, hasten to commit them to paper, and count them monthly, as the means of planting such scaurs, and purchasing such wastes; replacing dreams of fiction by other prospective visions of walks by

> 'Fountain heads, and pathless groves;
> Places which pale passion loves.'

This cannot be; but I may work substantial husbandry, *i. e.* write history, and such concerns. They will not be received with the same enthusiasm; at least I much doubt, the general

knowledge that an author must write for his bread, at least for improving his pittance, degrades him and his productions in the public eye. He falls into the second-rate rank of estimation:

> 'While the harness sore galls, and the spurs his side goad,
> The high-mettled racer's a hack on the road.'

It is a bitter thought; but if tears start at it, let them flow. My heart clings to the place I have created. There is scarce a tree on it that does not owe its being to me.

"What a life mine has been! — half educated, almost wholly neglected, or left to myself; stuffing my head with most nonsensical trash, and undervalued by most of my companions for a time; getting forward, and held a bold and a clever fellow, contrary to the opinion of all who thought me a mere dreamer; broken-hearted for two years; my heart handsomely pieced again — but the crack will remain till my dying day. Rich and poor four or five times; once on the verge of ruin, yet opened a new source of wealth almost overflowing. Now to be broken in my pitch of pride, and nearly winged (unless good news should come:) because London chooses to be in an uproar, and in the tumult of bulls and bears, a poor inoffensive lion like myself is pushed to the wall. But what is to be the end of it? God knows; and so ends the catechism.

Nobody in the end can lose a penny by me — that is one comfort. Men will think pride has had a fall. Let them indulge their own pride in thinking that my fall will make them higher, or seem so at least. I have the satisfaction to recollect that my prosperity has been of advantage to many, and to hope that some at least will forgive my transient wealth on account of the innocence of my intentions, and my real wish to do good to the poor. Sad hearts, too, at Darnick, and in the cottages of Abbotsford. I have half resolved never to see the place again. How could I tread my hall with such a diminished crest? — how live a poor indebted man, where I was once the wealthy — the honoured? I was to have gone there on Saturday in joy and prosperity to receive my friends.

My dogs will wait for me in vain. It is foolish — but the thoughts of parting from these dumb creatures have moved me more than any of the painful reflections I have put down. Poor things, I must get them kind masters! There may be yet those who, loving me, may love my dog, because it has been mine. I must end these gloomy forebodings, or I shall lose the tone of mind with which men should meet distress. I feel my dogs' feet on my knees. I hear them whining and seeking me everywhere. This is nonsense, but it is what they would do could they know how things may be. An odd thought strikes me — When I die, will the journal of these days be taken out of the ebony cabinet at Abbotsford, and read with wonder, that the well-seeming Baronet should ever have experienced the risk of such a hitch? Or will it be found in some obscure lodging-house, where the decayed son of Chivalry had hung up his scutcheon, and where one or two old friends will look grave, and whisper to each other, 'Poor gentleman' — 'a well-meaning man' — 'nobody's enemy but his own' — 'thought his parts would never wear out' — 'family poorly left' — 'pity he took that foolish title.' Who can answer this question?

"Poor Will Laidlaw — poor Tom Purdie — such news will wring your hearts, and many a poor fellow's besides, to whom my prosperity was daily bread.

"Ballantyne behaves like himself, and sinks the prospect of his own ruin in contemplating mine. I tried to enrich him indeed, and now all — all is in the balance. He will have the Journal still, that is a comfort, for sure they cannot find a better editor. *They* — alas, who will *they* be — the *unbekannten obern** who may have to dispose of my all as they will? Some hard-eyed banker — some of these men of millions whom I described.

"I have endeavoured to give vent to thoughts naturally so painful, by writing these notes — partly to keep them at bay by busying myself with the history of the French Convention. I thank God I can do both with reasonable composure. I

* *Unbekannten obern* — unknown rulers.

wonder how Anne will bear such an affliction. She is passionate, but stout-hearted and courageous in important matters, though irritable in trifles. I am glad Lockhart and his wife are gone. Why? I cannot tell — but I *am* pleased to be left to my own regrets, without being melted by condolences, though of the most sincere and affectionate kind.

"Oddly enough, it happened mine honest friend Hector Macdonald came in before dinner, to ask a copy of my seal of arms, with a sly kindliness of intimation that it was for some agreeable purpose. *Half-past eight.* I closed this book under the impression of impending ruin. I open it an hour after (thanks be to God) with the strong hope that matters will be got over safely and honourably, in a mercantile sense. Cadell came at eight to communicate a letter from Hurst and Robinson, intimating they had stood the storm.

"I shall always think the better of Cadell for this—not merely because 'his feet are beautiful on the mountains who brings good tidings,'* but because he showed feeling — deep feeling, poor fellow. He, who I thought had no more than his numeration-table, and who, if he had had his whole counting-house full of sensibility, had yet his wife and children to bestow it upon — I will not forget this, if all keeps right. I love the virtues of rough-and-round men — the others' are apt to escape in salt rheum, sal-volatile, and a white pocket-handkerchief.

"*December* 19. — Ballantyne here before breakfast. He looks on last night's news with confidence. Constable came in and sat an hour. The old gentleman is firm as a rock. He talks of going to London next week. But I must go to work.

"*December* 20. — Dined at Lord Chief-Baron's. Lord Justice-Clerk; Lord President; Captain Scarlett, a gentlemanlike young man, the son of the great Counsellor,† and a friend

* Isaiah lii. 7.

† Mr. Scarlett, now Lord Abinger.

of my son Walter; Lady Charlotte Hope and other womankind; R. Dundas of Arniston, and his pleasant and good-humoured little wife, whose quick, intelligent look pleases me more, though her face be plain, than a hundred mechanical beauties. I like Ch.-Ba. Shepherd very much — as much, I think, as any man I have learned to know of late years. There is a neatness and precision, a closeness and truth in the tone of his conversation, which shows what a lawyer he must have been. Perfect good-humour and *naïveté* of manner, with a little warmth of temper on suitable occasions. His great deafness alone prevented him from being Lord Chief-Justice. I never saw a man so patient under such a malady. He loves society, and converses excellently, yet is often obliged, in a mixed company particularly, to lay aside his trumpet, retire into himself, and withdraw from the talk. He does this with an expression of patience in his countenance which touches one much. Constable's licence for the Dedication is come, which will make him happy.*

"*December* 21*st.* — Dined with James Ballantyne, and met R. Cadell, and my old friend Mathews, the comedian, with his son, now grown up a clever lad, who makes songs in the style of James Smith or Colman, and sings them with spirit. There have been odd associations attending my two last meetings with Mathews. The last time I saw him before yesterday evening, he dined with me in company with poor Sir Alexander Boswell, who was killed within a week.† I never saw Sir Alexander more. The time before was in 1815, when John Scott

* The Dedication of Constable's Miscellany was penned by Sir Walter: — "To His Majesty King George IV., the most generous Patron even of the most humble attempts towards the advantage of his subjects, This Miscellany, designed to extend useful knowledge and elegant literature, by placing works of standard merit within the attainment of every class of Readers, is most humbly inscribed by His Majesty's dutiful and devoted subject — Archibald Constable."

† See *ante*, Vol. VI. pp. 183, 207.

of Gala and I were returning from France, and passed through London, when we brought Mathews down as far as Leamington. Poor Byron lunched, or rather made an early dinner with us at Long's, and a most brilliant day we had of it. I never saw Byron so full of fun, frolic, wit, and whim: he was as playful as a kitten. Well, I never saw him again.* So this man of mirth, with his merry meetings, has brought me no luck. I like better that he should throw in his talent of mimicry and humour into the present current tone of the company, than that he should be required to give this, that, and t'other *bit* selected from his public recitations. They are good certainly — excellent; but then you *must* laugh, and that is always severe to me. When I do laugh in sincerity, the joke must be or seem unpremeditated. I could not help thinking, in the midst of the glee, what gloom had lately been over the minds of three of the company. What a stange scene if the surge of conversation could suddenly ebb like the tide, and show us the state of people's real minds!

'No eyes the rocks discover
Which lurk beneath the deep.'

Life could not be endured were it seen in reality. Things keep mending in London.

"*December* 22. — I wrote six of my close pages yesterday, which is about twenty-four pages in print. What is more, I think it comes off twangingly. The story is so very interesting in itself, that there is no fear of the book answering.† Superficial it must be, but I do not care for the charge. Better a superficial book which brings well and strikingly together the known and acknowledged facts, than a dull boring narrative, pausing to see farther into a mill-stone at every moment than the nature of the mill-stone admits. Nothing is so tiresome as walking through some beautiful scene with a *minute philosopher*, a botanist, or pebble-gatherer, who is eter-

* See *ante*, Vol. IV. pp. 213–217, 249.
† *Life of Napoleon.*

nally calling your attention from the grand features of the natural picture to look at grasses and chucky-stones. Yet, in their way, they give useful information; and so does the minute historian. Gad, I think that will look well in the preface. My bile is quite gone; I really believe it arose from mere anxiety. What a wonderful connexion between the mind and body!

"The air of *Bonnie Dundee* running in my head to-day, I wrote a few verses to it before dinner, taking the key-note from the story of Clavers leaving the Scottish Convention of Estates in 1688–9.* I wonder if they are good. Ah, poor Will Erskine! thou couldst and wouldst have told me. I must consult J. B., who is as honest as was W. E. But then, though he has good taste too, there is a little of *Big Bow-wow* about it. Can't say what made me take a frisk so uncommon of late years as to write verses of free-will. I suppose the same impulse which makes birds sing when the storm has blown over.

"Dined at Lord Minto's. There were Lord and Lady Ruthven, William Clerk, and Thomas Thomson, — a right choice party. There was also my very old friend Mrs. Brydone, the relict of the traveller, and daughter of Principal Robertson, and really worthy of such a connexion — Lady Minto, who is also peculiarly agreeable — and her sister, Mrs. Admiral Adam, in the evening.

"*December* 23. — Lord Minto's father, the first Earl, was a man among a thousand. I knew him very, very intimately in the beginning of the century, and, which was very agreeable, was much at his house on very easy terms. He loved the Muses, and worshipped them in secret, and used to read some of his poetry, which was but middling. With the mildest manners, he was very tenacious of his opinions, although he changed them twice in the crises of politics. He was the early friend of Fox, and made a figure towards the end of the American war, or during the struggles betwixt Fox and

* See Scott's *Poetical Works*, vol. xii. pp. 194–7.

Pitt. Then came the Revolution, and he joined the Anti-Gallican party so keenly, that he declared against Addington's peace with France, and was for a time, I believe, a Wyndhamite. He was reconciled to the Whigs on the Fox and Grenville coalition; but I have heard that Fox, contrary to his wont, retained such personal feelings as made him object to Sir Gilbert Elliot's having a seat in the Cabinet; so he was sent Governor-General to India — a better thing, I take it, for his fortunes. He died shortly after his return,* on his way down to his native country. He was a most pleasing and amiable man. I was very sorry for his death, though I do not know how we should have met, for a contested election in Roxburghshire had placed some coldness betwixt the present Lord and me. I was certainly anxious for Sir Alexander Don, both as friend of my most kind friend Charles Duke of Buccleuch, and on political accounts; and those thwartings are what men in public life do not like to endure. After a cessation of friendship for some years, we have now come about again. We never had the slightest personal dispute or disagreement. But politics are the blowpipe beneath whose influence the best cemented friendships diffuse; and ours, after all, was only a very familiar acquaintance.

"It is very odd that the common people about Minto and the neighbourhood will not believe at this hour that the first Earl is dead. They think he had done something in India which he could not answer for — that the house was rebuilt on a scale unusually large to give him a suite of secret apartments, and that he often walks about the woods and crags of Minto at night, with a white nightcap and long white beard. The circumstance of his having died on the road down to Scotland is the sole foundation of this absurd legend, which shows how willing the public are to gull themselves when they can find no one else to take the trouble. I have seen people who could read, write, and cipher, shrug their shoulders and look mysterious when this subject was mentioned. One very absurd addition was made on occasion of a great ball at Minto

* Gilbert, Earl of Minto, died in June 1814.

House, which it was said was given to draw all people away from the grounds, that the concealed Earl might have leisure for his exercise. This was on the principle in the German play,* where, to hide their conspiracy, the associates join in a chorus song.

"We dined at home; Mr. Davidoff and his tutor kept an engagement with us to dinner, notwithstanding the death of the Emperor Alexander. They went to the play with the womankind; I staid at home to write.

"*December* 24. — Wrote to Walter and Jane, and gave the former an account of how things had been in the money market. Constable has a new scheme of publishing the works of the Author of Waverley in a superior style, at £1: 1s. volume. He says he will answer for making £20,000 of this, and liberally offered me any share of the profits. I have no great claim to any, as I have only to contribute the notes, which are light work; yet a few thousands coming in will be a good thing — besides the Printing Office. Constable, though valetudinary, and cross with his partner, is certainly as good a pilot in these rough seas as ever man put faith in. His rally has put me in mind of the old song —

> 'The tailor raise and shook his duds,
> He gar'd the BILLS flee aff in cluds,
> And they that staid gat fearfu' thuds —
> The tailor proved a man, O.'

"We are for Abbotsford to-day, with a light heart.

"*December* 25, *Abbotsford* — Arrived here last night at seven. Our halls are silent compared to last year, but let us be thankful — *Barbarus has segetes? Nullum numen abest, si sit prudentia.* There shall be no lack of wisdom. But come —*il faut cultiver notre jardin.*† Let us see, I shall write out the Bonnets of Bonnie Dundee. I will sketch a preface

* See Canning's *German Play*, in the *Anti-Jacobin.*

† See *Candide.*

to La Rochejacquelin for Constable's Miscellany, and try about a specimen of notes for the Waverley novels. Together with letters and by-business, it will be a good day's work.

'I make a vow,
And keep it true.'

I will accept no invitation for dinner, save one to Newton-Don, and Mertoun to-morrow, instead of Christmas-Day. On this day of general devotion I have a particular call for gratitude!!"

CHAPTER LXVI.

Constable in London — Extract from James Ballantyne's Memorandum — Scott's Diary resumed — Progress of Woodstock — Review of Pepys' Diary — Skene, Scrope, Mathews, &c. — Commercial alarms renewed at intervals — Catastrophe of the three houses of Hurst & Robinson, Constable, and Ballantyne.

JAN. & FEB. 1826.

It was not till nearly three weeks after Sir Walter penned the last-quoted paragraph of his Diary, that Mr. Constable made his appearance in London. I saw him immediately. Having deferred his journey imprudently, he had performed it very rapidly; and this exertion, with mental excitement, had brought on a sharp access of gout, which confined him for a couple of days to his hotel in the Adelphi — *reluctantem draconem.* A more impatient spirit never boiled in a feverish frame. It was then that I, for the first time, saw full swing given to the tyrannical temper of *the Czar.* He looked, spoke, and gesticulated like some hoary despot, accustomed to nothing but the complete indulgence of every wish and whim, against whose sovereign authority his most trusted satraps and tributaries had suddenly revolted — open rebellion in twenty provinces — confusion in the capital — treason in the palace. I will not repeat his haughty ravings of scorn and wrath. I listened to these with wonder and commiseration; nor were such feelings mit-

igated when, having exhausted his violence of vituperation against many persons of whom I had never before heard him speak but as able and trusted friends, he cooled down sufficiently to answer my question as to the practical business on which the note announcing his arrival in town had signified his urgent desire to take my advice. Constable told me that he had already seen one of the Hurst and Robinson firm, and that the storm which had seemed to be "blown over" had, he was satisfied, only been lulled for a moment, to burst out in redoubled fury. If they went, however, he must follow. He had determined to support them through the coming gale as he had done through the last; and he had the means to do so effectually, provided Sir Walter would stand by him heartily and boldly.

The first and most obvious step was to make large sales of copyrights; and it was not surprising that Constable should have formed most extravagant notions of the marketable value of the property of this nature in his possession. Every bookseller is very apt to do so. A manuscript is submitted to him; he inspects it with coldness and suspicion; with hesitation offers a sum for it; obtains it, and sends it to be printed. He has hardly courage to look at the sheets as they are thrown off; but the book is at last laid on his counter, and he from that moment regards it with an eye of parental fondness. It is *his;* he considers it in that light quite as much as does the author, and is likely to be at least as sorely provoked by anything in the shape of hostile criticism. If this be the usual working of self-love or self-interest in such cases, what wonder that the man * who

* On seeing the passage in the text, Mr. Constable's surviving partner writes as follows: — "No better illustration of this buoyant idea

had at his disposal (to say nothing of innumerable minor properties) the copyrights of the Encyclopædia Britannica, with its supplement, a moiety of the Edinburgh Review, nearly all Scott's Poetry, the Waverley Novels, and the advancing Life of Napoleon — who had made, besides, sundry contracts for novels by Scott, as yet unwritten — and who seriously viewed his plan of the new Miscellany as in itself the sure foundation of a gigantic fortune, — what wonder that the sanguine Constable should have laid to his soul the flattering unction that he had only to display such resources in some quarter totally above the momentary pressure of *the trade*, and command an advance of capital adequate to relieve him and all his allies from these unfortunate difficulties about a few paltry "sheafs" of stamped paper? To be brief, he requested me to accompany him, as soon as he could get into his carriage, to the Bank of England, and support him (as a confidential friend of the *Author of Waverley*) in his application for a loan of from £100,000 to £200,000 on the security of the copyrights in his possession. It is needless to say that, without distinct instructions from Sir Walter, I could not take upon me to interfere in such a business as this. Constable, when I refused, became livid with rage. After a long silence, he stamped on the ground, and swore that he could and would do alone. I left him in stern indignation.

There was another scene of the same kind a day or

of the value of literary property is to be found than in the now well ascertained fact of Constable himself, in 1811, over-estimating his partner, Mr. Hunter, *out* of the concern at the Cross to the tune of some £10,000 or £12,000 — a blow from which the firm never recovered. — R. C."

two afterwards, when his object was to get me to back his application to Sir Walter to borrow £20,000 in Edinburgh, and transmit it to him in London. I promised nothing but to acquaint Scott immediately with his request, and him with Scott's answer. Sir Walter had, ere the message reached him, been made aware that his advances had already been continued in the absence of all ground for rational hope.

It is no business of mine to detail Constable's subsequent proceedings on this his last visit to London. Everywhere he found distrust. The metropolitan bankers had enough on their hands at a time when, as Mr. Huskisson afterwards confessed in Parliament, the Bank of England itself was on the verge of a stoppage, without embarrassing themselves with new securities of the uncertain and precarious nature of literary property. The great bookselling houses were all either labouring themselves, or watching with fear and trembling the daily aggravated symptoms of distress among their friends and connexions. Constable lingered on, fluctuating between wild hope and savage despair, until, I seriously believe, he at last hovered on the brink of insanity. When he returned to Edinburgh, it was to confront creditors whom he knew he could not pay.

Before that day came, I had necessarily been informed of the nature of Scott's connexion with commercial speculations; but I had not been prepared for the amount to which Constable's ruin must involve him, until the final blow was struck.

I believe I have now said enough by way of preface to Sir Walter's Diary from Christmas 1825, to the latter part of January 1826, when my darkest anticipations were more than realized. But before I return to this

Diary, it may be well to transcribe the very short passage of James Ballantyne's deathbed memorandum which refers to this painful period. Mr. Ballantyne says, in that most candid paper: —

"I need not here enlarge upon the unfortunate facility which, at the period of universal confidence and indulgence, our and other houses received from the banks. Suffice it to say, that all our appearances of prosperity, as well as those of Constable, and Hurst and Robinson, were merely shadows, and that from the moment the bankers exhibited symptoms of doubt, it might have been easy to discover what must be the ultimate result. During weeks, and even months, however, our house was kept in a state of very painful suspense. The other two, I have no doubt, saw the coming events more clearly. I must here say, that it was one of Sir Walter's weaknesses to shrink too much from looking evil in the face, and that he was apt to carry a great deal too far — 'sufficient for the day is the evil thereof.' I do not think it was more than three weeks before the catastrophe that he became fully convinced it was impending — if indeed his feelings ever reached the length of conviction at all. Thus, at the last, his fortitude was very severely tried indeed."

DIARY.

"*Abbotsford, December* 26, 1825. — My God! what poor creatures we are! After all my fair proposals yesterday, I was seized with a most violent pain in the right kidney and parts adjacent, which forced me instantly to go to bed and send for Clarkson.* He came, inquired, and pronounced the complaint to be gravel augmented by bile. I was in great

* James Clarkson, Esq., Surgeon, Melrose, son to Scott's old friend Dr. Clarkson of Selkirk.

agony till about two o'clock, but awoke with the pain gone. I got up, had a fire in my dressing-closet, and had Dalgleish to shave me — two trifles, which I only mention, because they are contrary to my hardy and independent personal habits. But although a man cannot be a hero to his valet, his valet in sickness becomes of great use to him. I cannot expect that the first will be the last visit of this cruel complaint: but 'shall we receive good at the hand of God, and not receive evil?' *

"*December 27th.* — Slept twelve hours at a stretch, being much exhausted. Totally without pain to-day, but uncomfortable from the effects of calomel, which, with me at least, is like the assistance of an auxiliary army, just one degree more tolerable than the enemy it chases away. Calomel contemplations are not worth recording. I wrote an introduction and a few notes to the Memoirs of Madame La Rochejacquelin, † being all that I was equal to. Sir Adam Fergusson came over and tried to marry my verses to the tune of Bonnie Dundee. They seem well adapted to each other. Dined with Lady S—— and Anne. Worked at Pepys in the evening, with the purpose of review for Quarterly.‡ Notwithstanding the depressing effects of the calomel, I feel the pleasure of being alone and uninterrupted. Few men, leading a quiet life, and without any strong or highly varied change of circumstances, have seen more variety of society than I — few have enjoyed it more, or been *bored*, as it is called, less by the company of tiresome people. I have rarely, if ever, found any one, out of whom I could not extract amusement or edification; and were I obliged to account for hints afforded on such occasions, I should make an ample deduction from my narrative powers. Still, however, from the earliest time I can remember, I preferred the pleasure of being alone to wishing for visiters, and have often taken a bannock and a bit of cheese

* Job ii. 10. † See *Constable's Miscellany*, vol. v.

‡ See the *Quarterly Review* for January 1826, — or Scott's *Miscellaneous Prose*, (Edin. Ed.) vol. xx.

to the wood or hill, to avoid dining with company. As I grew from boyhood to manhood, I saw this would not do; and that to gain a place in men's esteem, I must mix and bustle with them. Pride, and an exaltation of spirits, often supplied the real pleasure which others seem to feel in society; yet mine certainly upon many occasions was real. Still, if the question was, eternal company, without the power of retiring within yourself, or solitary confinement for life, I should say, 'Turnkey, lock the cell!' My life, though not without its fits of waking and strong exertion, has been a sort of dream, spent in

'Chewing the cud of sweet and bitter fancy.' *

I have worn a wishing-cap, the power of which has been to divert present griefs by a touch of the wand of imagination, and gild over the future by prospects more fair than can be realized. Somewhere it is said that this castle-building — this wielding of the unreal trowel, is fatal to exertions in actual life. I cannot tell — I have not found it so. I cannot, indeed, say, like Madame Genlis, that in the imaginary scenes in which I have acted a part, I ever prepared myself for anything which actually befell me; but I have certainly fashioned out much that made the present hour pass pleasantly away, and much that has enabled me to contribute to the amusement of the public. Since I was five years old, I cannot remember the time when I had not some ideal part to play for my own solitary amusement.

"*December* 28. — Somehow I think the attack on Christmas-Day has been of a critical kind; and having gone off so well, may be productive rather of health than continued indisposition. If one is to get a renewal of health in his fifty-fourth year, he must look to pay fine for it. Last night George Thomson came to see how I was, poor fellow. He has talent, is well informed, and has an excellent heart; but there is great eccentricity about him. I wish to God I saw him provided in

* *As You Like It*, Act IV. Scene 3.

a country kirk. That, with a rational wife, would, I think, bring him to a steady temper; at present he is between the tyning and the winning. If I could get him to set to any hard study, he would do something clever.

"*How to make a critic.* — A sly rogue, sheltering himself under the generic name of Mr. Campbell, requested of me, through the penny-post, the loan of £50 for two years, having an impulse, as he said, to make this demand. As I felt no corresponding impulse, I begged to decline a demand which might have been as reasonably made by any Campbell on earth; and another impulse has determined the man of fifty pounds to send me anonymous abuse of my works, and temper, and selfish disposition. The severity of the joke lies in 14*d.* for postage, to avoid which, his next epistle shall go back to the clerks of the Post-Office, as not for Sir W—— S——. How the severe rogue would be disappointed, if he knew I never looked at more than the first and last lines of his satirical effusion! When I first saw that a literary profession was to be my fate, I endeavoured by all efforts of stoicism to divest myself of that irritable degree of sensibility — or, to speak plainly, of vanity — which makes the poetical race miserable and ridiculous. The anxiety of a poet for praise and for compliments I have always endeavoured to keep down.

"*December* 29. — Base feelings this same calomel gives one — mean, poor, and abject — a *wretch*, as Will Rose says.

> 'Fie fie on silly coward man,
> That he should be the slave o't.' *

Then it makes one 'wofully dogged and snappish,' as Dr. Rutty the Quaker † says in his *Gurnal.* — Must go to Wood-

* Burns.

† John Rutty, M. D., a physician of some eminence in Dublin, died in 1775, and his executors published his very curious and absurd *Spiritual Diary and Soliloquies.* Boswell describes Johnson as being much amused with the Quaker Doctor's minute confessions. See the *Life of Johnson, sub anno* 1777.

stock, yet am vexed by that humour of contradiction which makes me incline to do anything else in preference. Commenced preface for the new edition of my novels. The City of Cork send my freedom in a silver box.

"*December* 31. — Took a good sharp walk, the first time since my illness, and found myself the better in health and spirits. Being Hogmanay, there dined with us Colonel Russell and his sisters, Sir Adam Fergusson and Lady, Colonel Fergusson, with Mary and Margaret: an auld-world party, who made themselves happy in the auld fashion. I felt so tired about eleven, that I was forced to steal to bed.

"*January* 1, 1826. — A year has passed — another has commenced. These divisions of time influence our feelings as they recur. Yet there is nothing in it; for every day in the year closes a twelvemonth as well as the 31st December. The latter is only the solemn pause, as when a guide, showing a wild and mountainous road, calls on a party to look back at the scenes which they have just passed. To me this new year opens sadly. There are these troublesome pecuniary difficulties, which, however, I think this week should end. There is the absence of all my children, Anne excepted, from our little family festival. There is, besides, that ugly report of the 15th Hussars going to India. Walter, I suppose, will have some step in view, and will go, and I fear Jane will not dissuade him. — A hard frosty day — cold, but dry and pleasant under foot. Walked into the plantations with Anne and Anne Russell. A thought strikes me, alluding to this period of the year. People say that the whole human frame, in all its parts and divisions, is gradually in the act of decaying and renewing. What a curious time-piece it would be that could indicate to us the moment this gradual and insensible change had so completely taken place, that no atom was left of the original person who had existed at a certain period, but there existed in his stead another person having the same thewes and sinews, the same face and lineaments, the same consciousness — a new

ship built on an old plank — a pair of transmigrated stockings, like those of Sir John Cutler, all green, without one thread of the original black silk left! Singular — to be at once another and the same!

"*January* 2. — Weather clearing up in Edinburgh once more, and all will, I believe, do well. I am pressed to get on with Woodstock, and must try. I wish I could open a good vein of interest which would breathe freely. I must take my old way and write myself into good-humour with my task. It is only when I dally with what I am about, look back, and aside, instead of keeping my eyes straight forward, that I feel those cold sinkings of the heart. All men, I suppose, do so less or more. They are like the sensation of a sailor when the ship is cleared for action, and all are at their places — gloomy enough; but the first broadside puts all to rights. Dined at Huntly Burn with the Fergussons *en masse*.

"*January* 3. — Promises a fair day, and I think the progress of my labours will afford me a little exercise. Walked with Colonel Russell from eleven till two, the first good day's exercise I have had since coming here. We went through all the Terrace, the Roman Planting,* over by the Stiel and Haxellcleuch, and so by the Rhymer's Glen to Chiefswood, which gave my heart a twinge, so disconsolate it seemed. Yet all is for the best. When I returned, signed a bond for £10,000, which will disencumber me of all pressing claims;† when I get forwards Woodstock and Nap. there will be £12,000 and upwards, and I hope to add £3000 against this time next year, or the devil must hold the dice. J. B. writes me seriously on the carelessness of my style. I did not think

* This plantation now covers the remains of an old Roman road from the Great Camp on the Eildon hills to the ford below Scott's house.

† When settling his estate on his eldest son, Sir Walter had retained the power of burdening it with £10,000 for behoof of his younger children: he now raised the sum for the assistance of the struggling firms. See *ante*, p. 265.

I had been more careless than usual; but I dare say he is right. I will be more cautious.

"*January* 4. — Despatched the deed executed yesterday. Mr. and Mrs. Skene, my excellent friends, came to us from Edinburgh. Skene, distinguished for his attainments as a draughtsman, and for his highly gentlemanlike feelings and character, is Laird of Rubislaw, near Aberdeen. Having had an elder brother, his education was somewhat neglected in early life, against which disadvantage he made a most gallant fight, exerting himself much to obtain those accomplishments which he has since possessed. Admirable in all exercises, there entered a good deal of the cavalier into his early character. Of late he has given himself much to the study of antiquities. His wife, a most excellent person, was tenderly fond of Sophia. They bring so much old-fashioned kindness and good-humour with them, besides the recollections of other times, that they must be always welcome guests. Letter from Mr. Scrope,* announcing a visit.

"*January* 5. — Got the desired accommodation, which will put J. B. quite straight, but am a little anxious still about Constable. He has immense stock, to be sure, and most valuable, but he may have sacrifices to make to convert a large proportion of it into ready money. The accounts from London are most disastrous. Many wealthy persons totally ruined, and many, many more have been obliged to purchase their safety at a price they will feel all their lives. I do not hear

* William Scrope, Esq. of Lincolnshire — the representative of the Lords Scrope of Bolton (to whose peerage he is, I believe, entitled), was at this period much in Scotland, being a zealous angler and deer-stalker. He had a lease of Lord Somerville's pavilion opposite Melrose, and lived on terms of affectionate intimacy with Sir Walter Scott. There occurs in a subsequent entry an allusion to Mr. Scrope's eminence as an amateur artist. [Since these pages first appeared, Mr. Scrope's varied accomplishments have been displayed in the interesting and elegant volume, entitled, *Art of Deer-Stalking* — Royal 8vo. London, 1839.]

things have been so bad in Edinburgh; and J. B.'s business has been transacted by the banks with liberality.

"Colonel Russell told us last night that the last of the Moguls, a descendant of Kubla-Khan, though having no more power than his effigies at the back of a set of playing-cards, refused to meet Lord Hastings, because the Governor-General would not agree to remain standing in his presence. Pretty well for the blood of Timur in these degenerate days!

"Much alarmed. I had walked till twelve with Skene and Russell, and then sat down to my work. To my horror and surprise I could neither write nor spell, but put down one word for another, and wrote nonsense. I was much overpowered at the same time, and could not conceive the reason. I fell asleep, however, in my chair, and slept for two hours. On my waking, my head was clearer, and I began to recollect that last night I had taken the anodyne left for the purpose by Clarkson, and, being disturbed in the course of the night, I had not slept it off. Obliged to give up writing to-day — read Pepys instead.

"*January* 6. — This seems to be a feeding storm, coming on by little and little. Wrought all day, and dined quiet. My disorder is wearing off, and the quiet society of the Skenes suits my present humour. I really thought I was in for some very bad illness. Curious expression of an Indian-born boy just come from Bengal, a son of my cousin George Swinton. The child saw a hare run across the fields, and exclaimed, 'See, there is a little tiger!'

"*January* 7 — *Sunday.* — Knight, a young artist, son of the performer, came to do a picture of me at the request of Terry. This is very far from being agreeable, as I submitted to that state of constraint last year to Newton, at request of Lockhart; to Leslie, at request of my American friend;* to Wilkie, for his picture of the King's arrival at Holyrood House; and some

* Sir Walter omits the name of his friend, — Mr. Ticknor of Boston, who possesses Mr. Leslie's portrait.

one besides. I am as tired of the operation as old Maida, who had been so often sketched that he got up and walked off with signs of loathing whenever he saw an artist unfurl his paper, and handle his brushes. But this young man is civil and modest; and I have agreed he shall be in the room while I work, and take the best likeness he can, without compelling me into the fixed attitude and yawning fatigues of an actual sitting. I think, if he has talent, he may do more my way than in the customary mode; at least I can't have the hang-dog look which the unfortunate Theseus has who is doomed to sit for what seems an eternity.*

"I wrought till two o'clock — indeed till I was almost nervous with correcting and scribbling. I then walked, or rather was dragged through the snow by Tom Purdie, while Skene accompanied. What a blessing there is in a fellow like Tom, whom no familiarity can spoil, whom you may scold and praise and joke with, knowing the quality of the man is unalterable in his love and reverence to his master. Use an ordinary servant in the same way, and he will be your master in a month. We should thank God for the snow as well as summer flowers. This brushing exercise has put all my nerves into tone again, which were really jarred with fatigue until my very backbone seemed breaking. This comes of trying to do too much. J. B.'s news are as good as possible. — Prudence, prudence, and all will do excellently.

"*January* 8. — Frost and snow still. Write to excuse myself from attending the funeral of my aunt Mrs. Curle, which takes place to-morrow at Kelso. She was a woman of the old Sandy-Knowe breed, with the strong sense, high principle, and indifferent temper which belonged to my father's family. She lived with great credit on a moderate income, and I believe gave away a great deal of it.†

* ——— sedet, æternumque sedebit
Infelix Theseus —— VIRGIL.

† In a letter of this date, to his sister-in-law, Mrs. Thomas Scott, Sir Walter says — "Poor Aunt Curle died like a Roman, or rather

"*January* 9. — Mathews the comedian, and his son, come to spend a day at Abbotsford. Mr. Scrope also comes out.

"*January* 10. — Bodily health, the mainspring of the microcosm, seems quite restored. No more flushing or nervous fits, but the sound mind in the sound body. What poor things does a fever-fit or an overflowing of bile make of the master of creation. The snow begins to fall thick this morning —

> 'The landlord then aloud did say,
> As how he wished they would go away.'

To have our friends shut up here would be rather too much of a good thing. The day cleared up, and was very pleasant. Had a good walk, and looked at the curling. Mr. Mathews made himself very amusing in the evening. He has the good-nature to show his accomplishments without pressing, and without the appearance of feeling pain. On the contrary, I dare say he enjoys the pleasure he communicates.

"*January* 11. — I got proof-sheets, in which it seems I have repeated a whole passage of history which had been told before. James is in an awful stew, and I cannot blame him; but then he should consider the *hyoscyamus* which I was taking, and the anxious botheration about the money-market. However, as Chaucer says —

> 'There is na workeman
> That can bothe worken wel and hastilie,
> This must be done at leasure parfaitly.'

"*January* 12. — Mathews last night gave us a very perfect imitation of Old Cumberland, who carried the poetic jealousy and irritability farther than any man I ever saw. He was a great flatterer, too, the old rogue. Will Erskine used to admire him. I think he wanted originality. A very high-bred

like one of the Sandy-Knowe bairns, the most stoical race I ever knew. She turned every one out of the room, and drew her last breath alone. So did my uncle Captain Robert Scott, and several others of that family."

man in point of manners in society. Upon the whole, the days pass pleasantly enough — work till one or two, then an hour or two hours' walk in the snow, then lighter work, or reading. Late dinner, and singing, or chat, in the evening. Mathews has really all the will, as well as the talent, to be amusing. He confirms my idea of ventriloquism (which is an absurd word), as being merely the art of imitating sounds at a greater or less distance, assisted by some little points of trick to influence the imagination of the audience — the vulgar idea of a peculiar organization (beyond fineness of ear and of utterance) is nonsense.

"*January* 13. — Our party are about to disperse —

'Like youthful steers unyoked, east, north, and south.' *

I am not sorry, being one of those whom too much mirth always inclines to sadness. The missing so many of my own family, together with the serious inconveniences to which I have been exposed, give me at present a desire to be alone. The Skenes return to Edinburgh, so does Mr. Scrope — *item*, the little artist; Mathews to Newcastle; his son to Liverpool. So *exeunt omnes.*

"Mathews assures me that Sheridan was generally very dull in society, and sate sullen and silent, swallowing glass after glass, rather a hinderance than a help. But there was a time when he broke out with a resumption of what had been going on, done with great force, and generally attacking some person in the company, or some opinion which he had expressed. I never saw Sheridan but in large parties. He had a Bardolph countenance, with heavy features, but his eye possessed the most distinguished brilliancy. Mathews says it is very simple in Tom Moore to admire how Sheridan came by the means of paying the price of Drury-Lane Theatre, when all the world knows he never paid it at all; and that Lacy, who sold it, was reduced to want by his breach of faith. †

* 2*d King Henry IV.* Act IV. Scene 2.

† See Moore's *Life of Sheridan*, vol. i. p. 191. This work was published late in 1825.

"*January* 14. — An odd mysterious letter from Constable, who has gone post to London. It strikes me to be that sort of letter which I have seen men write when they are desirous that their disagreeable intelligence should be rather apprehended than expressed. I thought he had been in London a fortnight ago, disposing of property to meet this exigence, and so I think he should. Well, I must have patience. But these terrors and frights are truly annoying. Luckily the funny people are gone, and I shall not have the task of grinning when I am serious enough.

"A letter from J. B., mentioning Constable's journey, but without expressing much apprehension. He knows C. well, and saw him before his departure, and makes no doubt of his being able easily to extricate whatever may be entangled. I will not therefore make myself uneasy. I can help doing so surely, if I will. At least, I have given up cigars since the year began, and have now no wish to return to the habit, as it is called. I see no reason why one should not, with God's assistance, shun noxious thoughts, which foretell evil, and cannot remedy it.

"*January* 15. — Like yesterday, a hard frost. Thermometer at 10; water in my dressing-room frozen to flint; yet I had a fine walk yesterday, the sun dancing delightfully on 'grim Nature's visage hoar.'* Were it not the plague of being dragged along by another person, I should like such weather as well as summer, but having Tom Purdie to do this office, reconciles me to it. *I cannot cleik with John*, as old Mrs. Mure [of Caldwell] used to say. I mean, that an ordinary menial servant thus hooked to your side reminds me of the twin bodies mentioned by Pitscottie, being two trunks on the same waist and legs. One died before the other, and remained a dead burden on the back of its companion. Such is the close union with a person whom you cannot well converse with, and whose presence is yet indispensable to your getting on. An actual companion, whether humble or your equal, is still worse.

* Burns's *Vision*.

But Tom Purdie is just the thing, kneaded up between the friend and servant, as well as Uncle Toby's bowling-green between sand and clay. You are certain he is proud as well as patient under his burden, and you are under no more constraint than with a pony. I must ride him to-day if the weather holds up. Meantime, I will correct that curious fellow Pepys' Diary. I mean the article I have made of it for the Quarterly.

"*Edinburgh, January* 16. — Came through cold roads to as cold news. Hurst and Robinson have suffered a bill to come back upon Constable, which I suppose infers the ruin of both houses. We shall soon see. Dined with the Skenes.

"*January* 17. — James Ballantyne this morning, good honest fellow, with a visage as black as the crook. He hopes no salvation; has indeed taken measures to stop. It is hard, after having fought such a battle. Have apologized for not attending the Royal Society Club, who have a *gaudeamus* on this day, and seemed to count much on my being the preses. My old acquaintance, Miss Elizabeth Clerk, sister of Willie, died suddenly. I cannot choose but wish it had been Sir W. S., and yet the feeling is unmanly. I have Anne, my wife, and Charles, to look after. I felt rather sneaking as I came home from the Parliament-House — felt as if I were liable *monstrari digito* in no very pleasant way. But this must be borne *cum cæteris;* and, thank God, however uncomfortable, I do not feel despondent. I have seen Cadell, Ballantyne, and Hogarth: all advise me to execute a trust of my property for payment of my obligations; so does John Gibson,* and so I resolve to do. My wife and daughter are gloomy, but yet patient.

* Mr. John Gibson, junior, W. S., Mr. James Jollie, W. S., and Mr. Alexander Monypenny, W. S., were the three gentlemen who ultimately agreed to take charge, as trustees, of Sir Walter Scott's affairs; and certainly no gentlemen ever acquitted themselves of such an office in a manner more honourable to themselves, or more satisfactory to a client and his creditors.

"*January* 18.—He that sleeps too long in the morning, let him borrow the pillow of a debtor. So says the Spaniard, and so say I. I had of course an indifferent night of it. I wish these two days were over; but the worst *is over*. The Bank of Scotland has behaved very well—expressing a resolution to serve Constable's house and me to the uttermost; but as no one can say to what extent Hurst and Robinson's failure may go, borrowing would but linger it out.

"*January* 19. — During yesterday I received formal visits from my friends Skene and Colin Mackenzie (who, I am glad to see, looks well), with every offer of service. The Royal Bank also sent Sir John Hope * and Sir Henry Jardine † to offer to comply with my wishes. The Advocate ‡ came on the same errand. But I gave all the same answer — that my intention was to put the whole into the hands of a trustee, and to be contented with the event, and that all I had to ask was time to do so, and to extricate my affairs. I was assured of every accommodation in this way. From all quarters I have had the same kindness. — Letters from Constable and Robinson have arrived. The last persist in saying they will pay all and everybody. They say, moreover, in a postscript, that had Constable been in town ten days sooner, all would have been well. I feel quite composed and determined to labour. There is no remedy. I *guess* (as Mathews makes his Yankees say) that we shall not be troubled with visiters, and I *calculate* that I will not go out at all; so what can I do better than labour? Even yesterday I went about making notes on Waverley, according to Constable's plan. It will do good one day. To-day, when I lock this volume, I go to Woodstock. Heigho! — Knight came to stare at me to complete his portrait. He must have read a tragic page comparative to what he saw at Abbotsford. — We dined of course at home, and before and after dinner I finished about twenty

* Sir John Hope of Pinkie and Craighall, Bart.

† Sir H. Jardine, Remembrancer in the Scotch Exchequer.

‡ The Right Hon. Sir W. Rae, Bart.

printed pages of Woodstock, but to what effect others must judge. A painful scene after dinner, and another after supper, endeavouring to convince these poor dear creatures that they must not look for miracles, but consider the misfortune as certain, and only to be lessened by patience and labour.

"*January* 20. — Indifferent night — very bilious, which may be want of exercise. *Mais, pourtant, cultivons notre jardin.* The public favour is my only lottery. I have long enjoyed the foremost prize, and something in my breast tells me my evil genius will not overwhelm me if I stand by myself. Why should I not? I have no enemies — many attached friends. The popular ascendency which I have maintained is of the kind which is rather improved by frequent appearances. In fact, critics may say what they will, but '*hain* your reputation, and *tyne** your reputation,' is a true proverb.

"Sir William Forbes† called, — the same kind, honest, friend as ever, with all offers of assistance, &c. &c. &c. All anxious to serve me, and careless about their own risk of loss. And these are the cold, hard, money-making men, whose questions and control I apprehended! Lord Chief-Commissioner Adam also came to see me, and the meeting, though pleasing, was melancholy. It was the first time we had met since the *break-up* of his hopes in the death of his eldest son on his return from India, where he was Chief in Council, and highly esteemed.‡ The Commissioner is not a very early friend of mine, for I scarcely knew him till his settlement in Scotland with his present office. But I have since lived much with him, and taken kindly to him as one of the most pleasant, kind-

* To *hain* anything is, *Anglicè*, to deal very carefully, penuriously about it — *tyne*, to lose. Scott often used to say, "hain a pen and tyne a pen;" which is nearer the proverb alluded to.

† The late Sir William Forbes, Bart., succeeded his father (the biographer of Beattie) as chief of the head private banking-house in Edinburgh. Scott's amiable friend died 24th October 1828.

‡ John Adam, Esq. died on shipboard, on his passage homewards from Calcutta, 4th June 1825.

hearted, benevolent men I have ever known. It is high treason among the Tories to express regard for him or respect for the Jury Court in which he presides. I was against that experiment as much as any one. But it is an experiment, and the establishment (which the fools will not perceive) is the only thing which I see likely to give some prospects of ambition to our Bar, which has been otherwise so much diminished. As for the Chief-Commissioner, I dare say he does what all other people of consequence do in elections, and so forth. But he is the personal friend of the King, and the decided enemy of whatever strikes at the constitutional rights of the Monarch; besides, I love him for the various changes which he has endured through life, and which have been so great as to make him entitled to be regarded in one point of view as the most fortunate — in the other, the most unfortunate man in the world. He has gained and lost two fortunes by the same good luck and the same rash confidence, of which one raised, and the other now threatens, my *peculium*. And his quiet, honourable, and generous submission under circumstances more painful than mine, — for the loss of world's wealth was to him aggravated by the death of his youngest and darling son in the West Indies — furnished me at the time and now with a noble example. So Tory and Whig may go be d——d together, as names that have disturbed old Scotland, and torn asunder the most kindly feelings, since the first day they were invented. Yes, d—n them, they are the spells to rouse all our angry passions, and I dare say, notwithstanding the opinion of my private and calm moments, I will open on the cry again so soon as something occurs to claim my words. Even yet, God knows, I would fight in honourable contest with word or blow, for my political opinions; but I cannot permit that strife to mix its waters with my daily meal, those waters of bitterness which poison all mutual love and confidence betwixt the well-disposed on either side, and prevent them, if need were, from making mutual concessions and balancing the constitution against the ultras of both parties. The good man seems something broken by these afflictions.

"*January* 21. — Susannah in Tristram Shandy thinks death is best met in bed. I am sure trouble and vexation are not. The watches of the night press wearily when disturbed by fruitless regrets and disagreeable anticipations. But let it pass.

'Well, Goodman Time, or blunt, or keen,
Move thou quick, or take thy leisure,
Longest day will have its e'en,
Weariest life but treads a measure.'

"I have seen Cadell, who is very much downcast for the risk of their copy-rights being thrown away by a hasty sale. I suggested that if they went very cheap, some means might be fallen on to purchase them in. I fear the split betwixt Constable and Cadell will render impossible what might otherwise be hopeful enough. It is the Italian race-horses, I think, which, instead of riders, have spurs tied to their sides, so as to prick them into a constant gallop. Cadell tells me their gross profit was sometimes £10,000 a-year, but much swallowed up with expenses, and his partner's draughts which came to £4000 yearly. What there is to show for this, God knows. Constable's apparent expenses were very much within bounds.

"Colin Mackenzie entered, and with his usual kindness engages to use his influence to recommend some moderate proceeding to Constable's creditors, such as may permit him to go on and turn that species of property to account, which no man alive can manage so well as he.

"Followed Mr. Gibson with a most melancholy tale. Things are much worse with Constable than I apprehended. 'Naked we entered the world, and naked we leave it — blessed be the name of the Lord!'*

"*January* 22. — I feel neither dishonoured nor broken down by the bad — now really bad news I have received. I have walked my last on the domains I have planted — sate the last time in the halls I have built. But death would have taken them from me if misfortune had spared

* Job i. 21.

them. My poor people whom I loved so well!— There is just another die to turn up against me in this run of ill-luck; —*i. e.* if I should break my magic wand in the fall from this elephant, and lose my popularity with my fortune. Then Woodstock and Bony may both go to the paper-maker, and I may take to smoking cigars and drinking grog, or turn devotee, and intoxicate the brain another way. In prospect of absolute ruin, I wonder if they would let me leave the Court of Session. I would like, methinks, to go abroad,

'And lay my bones far from the *Tweed.*'

But I find my eyes moistening, and that will not do. I will not yield without a fight for it. It is odd, when I set myself to work *doggedly*, as Dr. Johnson would say, I am exactly the same man as I ever was — neither low-spirited nor *distrait.* In prosperous times I have sometimes felt my fancy and powers of language flag, but adversity is to me at least a tonic and bracer; the fountain is awakened from its inmost recesses, as if the spirit of affliction had troubled it in his passage.

. "Poor Mr. Pole the harper sent to offer me £500 or £600, probably his all.* There is much good in the world, after all. But I will involve no friend, either rich or poor. My own

* Mr. Pole had long attended Sir Walter Scott's daughters as teacher of the harp. To the end, Scott always spoke of his conduct on this occasion as the most affecting circumstance that accompanied his disasters. His letter was as follows: —

"*To Sir W. Scott, Bart.*

"Dear Sir, — I need not tell you how unhappy I am to hear of your sad distresses; but if I can relieve them for an hour, I shall in some measure be repaid. I have five or six hundred pounds that I have no use for, as I am in debt to no soul, and if you can wait, I will dispose of all I have, and convert them into money. It is a duty I owe you; for it is by your kind countenance, as well as a share of good conduct, that I have been able to save a few hundred pounds, which are quite at your service. The acceptance of which, till brighter times to you, will oblige, dear Sir Walter, your obedient

"JOHN FRED. POLE."

right hand shall do it — else will I be *done* in the slang language, and *undone* in common parlance.

"I am glad that, beyond my own family, who are, excepting Lady S., young and able to bear sorrow, of which this is the first taste to some of them, most of the hearts are past aching which would have once been inconsolable on this occasion. I do not mean that many will not seriously regret, and some perhaps lament my misfortunes. But my dear mother, my almost sister, Christy Rutherford, poor Will Erskine — those would have been mourners indeed.

"Well — exertion — exertion. O Invention, rouse thyself! May man be kind! May God be propitious! The worst is, I never quite know when I am right or wrong; and Ballantyne, who does know in some degree, will fear to tell me. Lockhart would be worth gold just now, but he too might be too diffident to speak broad out. All my hope is in the continued indulgence of the public. I have a funeral-letter to the burial of the Chevalier Yelin, a foreigner of learning and talent, who has died at the Royal Hotel. He wished to be introduced to me, and was to have read a paper before the Royal Society, when this introduction was to have taken place. I was not at the Society that evening, and the poor gentleman was taken ill at the meeting and unable to proceed. He went to his bed and never rose again; and now his funeral will be the first public place I shall appear at. He dead, and I ruined; — this is what you call a meeting.

"*January* 23. — Slept ill, not having been abroad these eight days — *splendida bilis*. Then a dead sleep in the morning, and when the awakening comes, a strong feeling how well I could dispense with it for once and for ever. This passes away, however, as better and more dutiful thoughts arise in my mind. I know not if my imagination has flagged—probably it has; but at least my powers of labour have not diminished during the last melancholy week. On Monday and Tuesday my exertions were suspended. Since Wednesday inclusive, I have written thirty-eight of my close manuscript

pages, of which seventy make a volume of the usual Novel size.

"Wrote till twelve A. M., finishing half of what I call a good day's work — ten pages of print, or rather twelve. Then walked in the Prince's Street pleasure-grounds with good Samaritan James Skene, the only one among my numerous friends who can properly be termed *amicus curarum mearum*, others being too busy or too gay, and several being estranged by habit.

"The walks have been conducted on the whole with much taste, though Skene has undergone much criticism, the usual reward of public exertions, on account of his plans. It is singular to walk close beneath the grim old castle, and think what scenes it must have seen, and how many generations of threescore and ten have risen and passed away. It is a place to cure one of too much sensation over earthly subjects of mutation. My wife and girl's tongues are chatting in a lively manner in the drawing-room. It does me good to hear them.

"*January* 24. — Constable came yesterday, and saw me for half an hour. He seemed irritable, but kept his temper under command. Was a little shocked when I intimated that I was disposed to regard the present works in progress as my own. I think I saw two things: — 1. That he is desirous to return into the management of his own affairs without Cadell, if he can. 2. That he relies on my connexion as the way of helping him out of the slough. Indeed he said he was ruined utterly without my countenance. I certainly will befriend him if I can, but Constable without Cadell is like getting the clock without the pendulum: — the one having the ingenuity, the other the caution of the business. I will see my way before making any bargain, and I will help them, I am sure, if I can, without endangering my last cast for freedom.—Worked out my task yesterday. — My kind friend Mrs. Coutts has got the cadetship for Pringle Shortreed, in which I was peculiarly interested.

"I went to the Court for the first time to-day, and, like the

man with the large nose, thought every body was thinking of me and my mishaps. Many were, undoubtedly, and all rather regrettingly; some obviously affected. It is singular to see the difference of men's manner whilst they strive to be kind or civil in their way of addressing me. Some smiled as they wished me good-day, as if to say, 'Think nothing about it, my lad; it is quite out of our thoughts.' Others greeted me with the affected gravity which one sees and despises at a funeral. The best-bred — all, I believe, meaning equally well — just shook hands and went on. A foolish puff in the papers, calling on men and gods to assist a popular author, who having choused the public of many thousands, had not the sense to keep wealth when he had it. If I am hard pressed, and measures used against me, I must use all means of legal defence, and subscribe myself bankrupt in a petition for sequestration. It is the course one should, at any rate, have advised a client to take. But for this I would, in a Court of Honour, deserve to lose my spurs. No, if they permit me, I will be their vassal for life, and dig in the mine of my imagination to find diamonds (or what may sell for such) to make good my engagements, not to enrich myself. And this from no reluctance to be called the Insolvent, which I probably am, but because I will not put out of the power of my creditors the resources, mental or literary, which yet remain to me. Went to the funeral of Chevalier Yelin, the literary foreigner mentioned on 22d. How many and how various are the ways of affliction! Here is this poor man dying at a distance from home, his proud heart broken, his wife and family anxiously expecting letters, and doomed only to learn they have lost a husband and father for ever. He lies buried on the Calton Hill, near learned and scientific dust — the graves of David Hume and John Playfair being side by side.

"*January* 25. — Anne is ill this morning. May God help us! If it should prove serious, as I have known it in such cases, where am I to find courage or comfort? A thought has struck me — Can we do nothing for creditors with the goblin

drama, called the Fortunes of Devorgoil? Could it not be added to Woodstock as a fourth volume? Terry refused a gift of it, but he was quite and entirely wrong; it is not good, but it may be made so. Poor Will Erskine liked it much.

"*January* 26. — Spoke to J. B. last night about Devorgoil, who does not seem to relish the proposal, alleging the comparative failure of Halidon Hill. Ay, says Self-Conceit, but he has not read it — and when he does, it is the sort of wild fanciful work betwixt heaven and earth, which men of solid parts do not estimate. Pepys thought Shakspeare's Midsummer-Night's Dream the most silly play he had ever seen, and Pepys was probably judging on the same grounds with J. B., though presumptuous enough to form conclusions against a very different work from any of mine. How if I send it to Lockhart by and by?

"Gibson comes with a joyful face, announcing all the creditors had unanimously agreed to a private trust. This is handsome and confidential, and must warm my best efforts to get them out of the scrape. I will not doubt — to doubt is to lose. Sir William Forbes took the chair, and behaved, as he has ever done, with the generosity of ancient faith and early friendship. That House is more deeply concerned than most. In what scenes have Sir William and I not borne share together — desperate and almost bloody affrays, rivalries, deep drinking matches, and finally, with the kindliest feelings on both sides, somewhat separated by his retiring much within the bosom of his family, and I moving little beyond mine. It is fated our planets should cross, though, and that at the periods most interesting for me. Down — down — a hundred thoughts.

"I hope to sleep better to-night. If I do not, I shall get ill, and then I cannot keep my engagements. Is it not odd? I can command my eyes to be awake when toil and weariness sit on my eyelids, but to draw the curtain of oblivion is beyond my power. I remember some of the wild Buccaneers, in their impiety, succeeded pretty well by shutting hatches and burn-

ing brimstone and assafœtida to make a tolerable imitation of *hell* — but the pirates' *heaven* was a wretched affair. It is one of the worst things about this system of ours, that it is a hundred times more easy to inflict pain than to create pleasure.

"*January 27th.* — Slept better, and less bilious, owing doubtless to the fatigue of the preceding night, and the more comfortable news. Wrote to Laidlaw, directing him to make all preparations for reduction. The Celtic Society present me with the most splendid broadsword I ever saw — a beautiful piece of art, and a most noble weapon. Honourable Mr. Steuart (second son of the Earl of Moray), General Graham Stirling, and MacDougal, attended as a committee to present it. This was very kind of my friends the Celts, with whom I have had so many merry meetings. It will be a rare legacy to Walter — for myself, good lack! it is like Lady Dowager Don's prize in a lottery of hardware; she — a venerable lady who always wore a haunch-hoop, silk negligé, and triple ruffles at the elbow — having the luck to gain a pair of silver spurs and a whip to correspond.

"*January 28th.* — These last four or five days I have wrought little; to-day I set on the steam and ply my paddles.

"*January 29.* — The proofs came so thick in yesterday that much was not done. But I began to be hard at work to-day. I must not *gurnalize* much.

"Mr. Jollie, who is to be my trustee, in conjunction with Gibson, came to see me; — a pleasant and good-humoured man, and has high reputation as a man of business. I told him, and I will keep my word, that he would at least have no trouble by my interfering and thwarting their management, which is not the unfrequent case of trusters and trustees.

"Constable's business seems unintelligible. No man thought the house worth less than £150,000. Constable told me, when he was making his will, that he was worth £80,000. Great profits on almost all the adventures. No bad speculations —

yet neither stock nor debt to show. Constable might have eaten up his share; but Cadell was very frugal. No doubt trading almost entirely on accommodation is dreadfully expensive.

"*January* 30. — I laboured fairly yesterday. The stream rose fast — if clearly, is another question; but there is bulk for it, at least — about thirty printed pages.

'And now again, boys, to the oar.'

"*January* 31. — There being nothing in the roll this morning, I stay at home from the Court, and add another day's perfect labour to Woodstock, which is worth five days of snatched intervals, when the current of thought and invention is broken in upon, and the mind shaken and diverted from its purpose by a succession of petty interruptions. I have now no pecuniary provisions to embarrass me, and I think, now the shock of the discovery is past and over, I am much better off on the whole. I feel as if I had shaken off from my shoulders a great mass of garments, rich indeed, but always more a burden than a comfort. I shall be free of an hundred petty public duties imposed on me as a man of consideration — of the expense of a great hospitality — and what is better, of the great waste of time connected with it. I have known in my day all kinds of society, and can pretty well estimate how much or how little one loses by retiring from all but that which is very intimate. I sleep and eat and work as I was wont; and if I could see those about me as indifferent to the loss of rank as I am, I should be completely happy. As it is, Time must salve that sore, and to Time I trust it.

"Since the 14th of this month no guest has broken bread in my house, save G. H. Gordon * one morning at breakfast. This happened never before since I had a house of my own. But I have played Abou Hassan long enough; and if the Caliph comes I would turn him back again.

* Mr. Gordon (of whom more in the sequel) was at this time Scott's amanuensis: he copied, that is to say, the MS. for press.

"*February* 1. — A most generous letter (though not more so than I expected) from Walter and Jane, offering to interpose with their fortune, &c. God Almighty forbid! — that were too unnatural in me to accept, though dutiful and affectionate in them to offer. They talk of India still. With my damaged fortune I cannot help them to remain by exchange, and so forth. God send what is for the best. Attended the Court, and saw J. B. and Cadell as I returned. Both very gloomy. Came home to work, &c., about two.

"*February* 2. — An odd visit this morning from Miss —— of ——, whose lawsuit with a Methodist parson of the name of —— made some noise. The worthy divine had in the basest manner interfered to prevent this lady's marriage by two anonymous letters, in which he contrived to refer the lover, to whom they were addressed, for farther corroboration to *himself*. The whole imposition makes the subject of a little pamphlet. The lady ventured for redress into the thicket of English law — lost one suit — gained another, with £300 damages, and was ruined. The appearance and person of Miss —— are prepossessing. She is about thirty years old, a brunette, with regular and pleasing features, marked with melancholy — an enthusiast in literature, and probably in religion. She had been at Abbotsford to see me, and made her way to me here, in the vain hope that she could get her story worked up into a novel; and certainly the thing is capable of interesting situations. It throws a curious light upon the aristocratic or rather hieratic influence exercised by the Methodist preachers within the *connexion*, as it is called. Admirable food this would be for the Quarterly, or any other reviewers, who might desire to feed fat their grudge against these sectarians. But there are two reasons against such a publication. First, it could do the poor sufferer no good. 2dly, It might hurt the Methodist connexion very much, which I for one would not like to injure. They have their faults, and are peculiarly liable to those of hypocrisy, and spiritual ambition, and priestcraft. On the other hand, they do infinite good,

carrying religion into classes in society where it would scarce be found to penetrate, did it rely merely upon proof of its doctrines, upon calm reason, and upon rational argument. The Methodists add a powerful appeal to the feelings and passions; and though I believe this is often exaggerated into absolute enthusiasm, yet I consider upon the whole they do much to keep alive a sense of religion, and the practice of morality necessarily connected with it. It is much to the discredit of the Methodist clergy, that when this calumniator was actually convicted of guilt morally worse than many men are hanged for, they only degraded him from the *first* to the *second* class of their preachers. If they believed him innocent, they did too much — if guilty, far too little.

"*February* 3. — This is the first time since my troubles that I felt at awaking,

> 'I had drunken deep
> Of all the blessedness of sleep.'

I made not the slightest pause, nor dreamed a single dream, nor even changed my side. This is a blessing to be grateful for. — There is to be a meeting of the creditors to-day, but I care not for the issue. If they drag me into the Court, *obtorto collo*, instead of going into this scheme of arrangement, they will do themselves a great injury, and perhaps eventually do me good, though it would give me much pain. — James Ballantyne is severely critical on what he calls imitations of Mrs. Radcliffe in Woodstock. Many will think with him — yet I am of opinion he is quite wrong, or as friend J. F.*

* J. F. stands for James Ferrier, Esq. — one of Sir Walter's brethren of the Clerk's table — the father of his esteemed and admired friend the authoress of *Marriage*, *The Inheritance*, &c. [I had found, as the second edition was advancing through the press, that Sir Walter owed not a little to the kindness of Mr. Ferrier, in the arrangement with Mr. Home, by which he came, in 1811, into the full enjoyment of his rights as a Clerk of Session. The following is part of a letter to Mr. F., dated Ashestiel, 18th Sept. 1811:— "My Dear Sir, I am favoured with your letter, acquainting me with your kind exertions

says, *vrong*. In the first place, am I to look on the mere fact of another author having treated a subject happily, as a bird looks on a potato-bogle which scares it away from a field, otherwise as free to its depredations as anywhere else? In 2d place, I have taken a wide difference: my object is not to excite fear of supernatural things in my reader, but to show the effect of such fear upon the agents in the story — one a man of sense and firmness — one a man unhinged by remorse — one a stupid uninquiring clown — one a learned and worthy, but superstitious divine. In 3d place, the book turns on this hinge, and cannot want it. But I will try to insinuate the refutation of Aldiboronti's exception into the prefatory matter. — From the 19th January to the 2d February inclusive, is exactly fifteen days, during which time, with the intervention of some days' idleness, to let imagination brood on the task a little, I have written a volume. I think, for a bet, I could have done it in ten days. Then I must have had no Court of Session to take me up hours every morning, and dissipate my attention and powers of working for the rest of the day. A volume, at cheapest, is worth £1000. This is working at the rate of £24,000 a-year; but then we must not bake buns faster than people have appetite to eat them. They are not essential to the market, like potatoes.

"John Gibson came to tell me in the evening that a meet-

on my part to supply my Lord Advocate with his materials. If I were to begin acknowledging my feelings of the friendship which you have shown me in this (to me very important matter), it would fill a much longer letter than at present I propose to write. But as you have thought me worthy of so much kindness, you must also give me credit for feeling it as I should do, and that is all that can be said among friends.

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"Yours faithfully, WALTER SCOTT.

"Pray, as you are a ruling elder, solve me a case of conscience. They are clearing out the modern additions from Melrose Abbey — will it be absolute sacrilege to build my cottage with the stones their operations afford, providing I can get them for next to nothing?"]

ing to-day had approved of the proposed trust. I know not why, but the news gives me little concern. I heard it as a party indifferent. I remember hearing that Mandrin * testified some horror when he found himself bound alive on the wheel, and saw the executioner approach with a bar of iron to break his limbs. After the second and third blow, he fell a-laughing, and being asked the reason by his confessor, said he laughed at his own folly, which had anticipated increased agony at every blow, when it was obvious that the *first* must have jarred and confounded the system of the nerves so much as to render the succeeding blows of little consequence. I suppose it is so with the moral feeling; at least I could not bring myself to be anxious whether these matters were settled one way or other.

"*February* 4. — Wrote to Mr. Laidlaw to come to town upon Monday, and see the trustees. To farm or not to farm, that is the question. With our careless habits, it were best, I think, to risk as little as possible. Lady Scott will not exceed with ready money in her hand; but calculating on the produce of a farm is different, and neither she nor I are capable of that minute economy. Two cows should be all we should keep. But I find Lady S. inclines much for the four. If she had her youthful activity, and could manage things, it would be well, and would amuse her. But I fear it is too late for work.

"Wrote only two pages (of manuscript) and a half to-day. As the boatswain said, one can't dance always *nouther*. But, were we sure of the quality of the stuff, what opportunities for labour does this same system of retreat afford us! I am convinced that in three years I could do more than in the last ten, but for the mine being, I fear, exhausted. Give me my

* "Authentic Memoirs of the remarkable Life and surprising Exploits of Mandrin, Captain-General of the French Smugglers, who for the space of nine months resolutely stood in defiance of the whole Army of France, &c. 8vo. Lond. 1755." See Waverley Novels, *The Betrothed*, chap. xxx., *note*.

popularity (*an awful postulate!*) and all my present difficulties shall be a joke in four years; and it is *not* lost yet, at least.

"*February* 5.— Rose after a sound sleep, and here am I without bile or anything to perturb my inward man. It is just about three weeks since so great a change took place in my relations in society, and already I am indifferent to it. But I have been always told my feelings of joy and sorrow, pleasure and pain, enjoyment and privation, are much colder than those of other people.

'I think the Romans call it stoicism.'

"Missie was in the drawing-room, and overheard William Clerk and me laughing excessively at some foolery or other in the back-room, to her no small surprise, which she did not keep to herself. But do people suppose that he was less sorry for his poor sister, or I for my lost fortune? If I have a very strong passion in the world, it is *pride*, and that never hinged upon world's gear, which was always with me — light come, light go.

"*February* 6.— Letters received yesterday from Lord Montagu, John Morritt, and Mrs. Hughes,— kind and dear friends all — with solicitous inquiries. But it is very tiresome to tell my story over again, and I really hope I have few more friends intimate enough to ask me for it. I dread letter-writing, and envy the old hermit of Prague, who never saw pen or ink. What then? one must write; it is a part of the law we live on. Talking of writing, I finished my six pages, neat and handsome, yesterday. — N. B. At night I fell asleep, and the oil dropped from the lamp upon my manuscript. Will this extreme unction make it go smoothly down with the public?

'Thus idly we profane the sacred time,
By silly prose, light jest, and lighter rhyme.'

I have a song to write, too, and I am not thinking of it. I

trust it will come upon me at once — a sort of catch it should be.* I walked out, feeling a little overwrought.

"*February* 7. — My old friend Sir Peter Murray called to offer his own assistance, Lord Justice-Clerk's, and Abercromby's, to negotiate for me a seat upon the Bench [of the Court of Session] instead of my sheriffdom and clerkship. I explained to him the use which I could make of my pen was not, I thought, consistent with that situation; and that, besides, I had neglected the law too long to permit me to think of it: but this was kindly and honourably done. I can see people think me much worse off than I think myself. They may be right; but I will not be beat till I have tried a rally, and a bold one.

"*February* 8. — Slept ill, and rather bilious in the morning. Many of the Bench now are my juniors. I will not seek *ex eleemosynâ* a place which, had I turned my studies that way, I might have aspired to long ago *ex meritis*. My pen should do much better for me than the odd £1000 a-year. If it fails, I will lean on what they leave me. Another chance might be, if it fails, in the patronage which might, after a year or two, place me in Exchequer. But I do not count on this unless, indeed, the Duke of Buccleuch, when he comes of age, should choose to make play. Got to my work again, and wrote easier than the two last days.

"Mr. Laidlaw came in from Abbotsford, and dined with us. We spent the evening in laying down plans for the farm, and deciding whom we should keep and whom dismiss among the people. This we did on the true negro-driving principle of self-interest — the only principle I know which *never* swerves from its objects. We chose all the active, young, and powerful men, turning old age and infirmity adrift. I cannot help this, for a guinea cannot do the work of five; but I will contrive to make it easier to the sufferers.

* See "Glee for King Charles," *Woodstock*, chap. xx.

"*February* 9. — A stormy morning, lowering and blustering like our fortunes. *Mea virtute me involvo.* But I must say to the muse of fiction as the Earl of Pembroke said to the ejected nuns of Wilton: — 'Go spin, you jades, go spin!' Perhaps she has no tow on her *rock.* When I was at Kilkenny last year we went to see a nunnery, but could not converse with the sisters because they were in *strict retreat.* I was delighted with the red-nosed Padre, who showed us the place with a sort of proud, unctuous humiliation, and apparent dereliction of the world, that had to me the air of a complete Tartuffe; a strong, sanguine, square-shouldered son of the Church, whom a Protestant would be apt to warrant against any sufferings he was like to sustain by privation. My purpose, however, just now was to talk of the *strict retreat,* which did not prevent the nuns from walking in their little garden, peeping at us, and allowing us to peep at them. Well, now *we* are in *strict retreat;* and if we had been so last year, instead of gallivanting to Ireland, this affair might not have befallen — if literary labour could have prevented it. But who could have suspected Constable's timbers to have been rotten from the beginning?

"Visited the Exhibition on my way home from the Court. The new rooms are most splendid, and several good pictures. The institution has subsisted but five years, and it is astonishing how much superior the worst of the present collection are to the teaboard-looking things which first appeared. John Thomson, of Duddingstone, has far the finest picture in the Exhibition, of a large size — subject *Dunluce,* a ruinous castle of the Antrim family, near the Giant's Causeway, with one of those terrible seas and skies which only Thomson can paint. Found Scrope there, improving a picture of his own, an Italian scene in Calabria. He is, I think, one of the very best amateur painters I ever saw — Sir George Beaumont scarcely excepted.

"I would not write to-day after I came home. I will not say could not, for it is not true; but I was lazy; felt the desire *far niente,* which is the sign of one's mind being at ease.

I read *The English in Italy*, which is a clever book. Byron used to kick and frisk more contemptuously against the literary gravity and slang than any one I ever knew who had climbed so high. Then, it is true, I never knew any one climb so high — and before you despise the eminence, carrying people along with you as convinced that you are not playing the fox and the grapes, you must be at the top. Moore told me some delightful stories of him. * * * * * *† He wrote from impulse, never from effort; and therefore I have always reckoned Burns and Byron the most genuine poetical geniuses of my time, and half a century before me. We have many men of high poetical talent, but none, I think, of that ever-gushing and perennial fountain of natural waters.

"Mr. Laidlaw dined with us. Says Mr. Gibson told him he would dispose of my affairs, were it any but Sir W. S. No doubt, so should I. I am wellnigh doing so at any rate. But, *fortuna juvante!* much may be achieved. At worst, the prospect is not very discouraging to one who wants little. Methinks I have been like Burns's poor labourer,

> 'So constantly in Ruin's sight,
> The view o't gives me little fright.'"

† Here follow several anecdotes, since published in Moore's *Life of Byron.*

CHAPTER LXVII.

Extract from James Ballantyne's Memoranda — Anecdote from Mr. Skene — Letters of January and February 1826, *to J. G. Lockhart, Mr. Morritt, and Lady Davy — Result of the embarrassments of Constable, Hurst, and Ballantyne — Resolution of Sir Walter Scott — Malachi Malagrowther.*

1826.

I INTERRUPT, for a moment, Sir Walter's Diary, to introduce a few collateral illustrations of the period embraced in the foregoing chapter. When he returned to Edinburgh from Abbotsford on Monday the 16th of January, he found (as we have seen) that Hurst & Co. had dishonoured a bill of Constable's; and then proceeded, according to engagement, to dine at Mr. Skene of Rubislaw's. Mr. Skene assures me that he appeared that evening quite in his usual spirits, conversing on whatever topic was started as easily and gaily as if there had been no impending calamity; but at parting, he whispered, "Skene, I have something to speak to you about; be so good as to look in on me as you go to the Parliament-House to-morrow." When Skene called in Castle Street, about half-past nine o'clock next morning, he found Scott writing in his study. He rose, and said, "My friend, give me a shake of your hand — mine is that of a beggar." He then told him that Ballantyne had just been with him, and that his ruin was certain

and complete; explaining, briefly, the nature of his connexion with the three houses, whose downfall must that morning be made public. He added, "Don't fancy I am going to stay at home to brood idly on what can't be helped. I was at work upon Woodstock when you came in, and I shall take up the pen the moment I get back from Court. I mean to dine with you again on Sunday, and hope then to report progress to some purpose." When Sunday came, he reported accordingly, that, in spite of all the numberless interruptions of meetings and conferences with his partner, the Constables, and men of business — to say nothing of his distressing anxieties on account of his wife and daughter — he had written a chapter of his novel every intervening day.

The reader may be curious to see what account James Ballantyne's memorandum gives of that dark announcement on the morning of Tuesday the 17th. It is as follows: — "On the evening of the 16th, I received from Mr. Cadell a distinct message putting me in possession of the truth. I called immediately in Castle Street, but found Sir Walter had gained an unconscious respite by being engaged out at dinner. It was between eight and nine next morning that I made the final communication. No doubt he was greatly stunned — but, upon the whole, he bore it with wonderful fortitude. He then asked, 'Well, what is the actual step we must first take — I suppose we must do something?' I reminded him that two or three thousand pounds were due that day, so that we had only to do what we must do — refuse payment — to bring the disclosure sufficiently before the world. He took leave of me with these striking words, 'Well, James, depend upon that, I will never forsake you.'"

After the ample details of Scott's Diary, it would be

idle to quote here many of his private letters in January 1826; but I must give two of those addressed to myself, — one written at Abbotsford on the 15th, the day before he started for Edinburgh to receive the fatal intelligence — the other on the 20th. It will be seen that I had been so very unwise as to intermingle with the account of one of my painful interviews with Constable, an expression of surprise at the nature of Sir Walter's commercial engagements, which had then for the first time been explained to me; and every reader will, I am sure, appreciate the gentleness of the reply, however unsatisfactory he may consider it as regards the main fact in question.

"*To John Lockhart, Esq., 25 Pall-Mall, London.*

"Abbotsford, January 15, 1826.

"My Dear Lockhart, — I have both your packets. I have been quite well since my attack, only for some time very down-hearted with the calomel and another nasty stuff they call hyoscyamus — and to say truth, the silence of my own household, which used to be merry at this season.

"I enclose the article on Pepys. It is totally uncorrected, so I wish of course much to see it in proof if possible, as it must be dreadfully inaccurate; the opiate was busy with my brain when the beginning was written, and as James Ballantyne complains wofully, so will your printer, I doubt. The subject is like a good sirloin, which requires only to be basted with its own drippings. I had little trouble of research or reference; perhaps I have made it too long, or introduced too many extracts — if so, use the pruning-knife, hedgebill, or axe, *ad libitum*. You know I don't care a curse about what I write, or what becomes of it.

"To-morrow, snow permitting, we go in to Edinburgh; meantime ye can expect no news from this place. I saw poor

Chiefswood the other day. Cock-a-pistol* sends his humble remembrances. Commend me a thousand times to the magnanimous Johnnie. I live in hopes he will not greatly miss Marion and the red cow. Don't let him forget poor ha-papa. — Farewell, my dear Lockhart: never trouble yourself about writing to me, for I suspect you have enough of that upon hand.

"Pardon my sending you such an unwashed, uncombed thing as the enclosed. I really can't see now to read my own hand, so bad have my eyes or my fingers or both become. Always yours affectionately, WALTER SCOTT."

"*To the Same.*

"Edinburgh, January 20, 1826.

"My Dear Lockhart, — I have your kind letter. Whenever I heard that Constable had made a *cessio fori*, I thought it became me to make public how far I was concerned in these matters, and to offer my fortune so far as it was prestable, and the completion of my literary engagements — (the better thing almost of the two) — to make good all claims upon Ballantyne and Co.; and even supposing that neither Hurst and Co. nor Constable and Co. ever pay a penny they owe me, my old age will be far from destitute — even if my right hand should lose its cunning. This is the *very worst* that can befall me; but I have little doubt that, with ordinary management, the affairs of those houses will turn out favourably. It is needless to add, that I will not engage myself, as Constable desires, for £20,000 more — or £2000 — or £200. I have advanced enough already to pay other people's debts, and must now pay my own. If our friend C. had set out a fortnight earlier, nothing of all this would have happened; but he let the hour of distress precede the hour of provision, and he and others must pay for it. Yet don't hint this to him, poor fellow — it is an infirmity of nature.

* A gardener, by name James Scott, who lived at a place called popularly Cock-a-pistol, because the battle of Melrose (A. D. 1526) began there.

"I have made my matters public, and have had splendid offers of assistance, all which I have declined, for I would rather bear my own burden, than subject myself to obligation. There is but one way in such cases.

"It is easy, no doubt, for any friend to blame me for entering into connexion with commercial matters at all. But I wish to know what I could have done better — excluded from the bar, and then from all profits for six years, by my colleague's prolonged life. Literature was not in those days what poor Constable has made it; and, with my little capital, I was too glad to make commercially the means of supporting my family. I got but £600 for the Lay of the Last Minstrel, and — it was a price that made men's hair stand on end — £1000 for Marmion. I have been far from suffering by James Ballantyne. I owe it to him to say, that his difficulties, as well as his advantages, are owing to me. I trusted too much to Constable's assurances of his own and his correspondents' stability, but yet I believe he was only sanguine. The upshot is just what Hurst and Co. and Constable may be able to pay me; if 15s. in the pound, I shall not complain of my loss, for I have gained many thousands in my day. But while I live I shall regret the downfall of Constable's house, for never did there exist so intelligent and so liberal an establishment. They went too far when money was plenty, that is certain; yet if every author in Britain had taxed himself half a year's income, he should have kept up the house which first broke in upon the monopoly of the London trade, and made letters what they now are.

"I have had visits from all the monied people, offering their purses — and those who are creditors, sending their managers and treasurers to assure me of their joining in and adopting any measure I may propose. I am glad of this for their sake, and for my own — for although I shall not desire to steer, yet I am the only person that can *conn*, as Lieutenant Hatchway says, to any good purpose. A very odd anonymous offer I had of £30,000,* which I rejected, as I did every other.

* Sir Walter never knew the name of this munificent person.

Unless I die, I shall beat up against this foul weather. A penny I will not borrow from any one. Since my creditors are content to be patient, I have the means of righting them perfectly, and the confidence to employ them. I would have given a good deal to have avoided the *coup d'eclat;* but that having taken place, I would not give sixpence for any other results. I fear you will think I am writing in the heat of excited resistance to bad fortune. My dear Lockhart, I am as calm and temperate as you ever saw me, and working at Woodstock like a very tiger. I am grieved for Lady Scott and Anne, who cannot conceive adversity can have the better of them, even for a moment. If it teaches a little of the frugality which I never had the heart to enforce when money was plenty, and it seemed cruel to interrupt the enjoyment of it in the way they liked best — it will be well.

"Kindest love to Sophia, and tell her to study the song* and keep her spirits up. Tyne heart, tyne all; and it is making more of money than it is worth to grieve about it. Kiss Johnnie for me. How glad I am fortune carried you to London before these reverses happened, as they would have embittered parting, and made it resemble the boat leaving the sinking ship. Yours, dear Lockhart, affectionately,

"WALTER SCOTT."

From Sir Walter's letters of the same period, to friends out of his own family, I select the following:—.

"*To J. B. S. Morritt, Esq., &c., Marine Terrace, Brighton.*

"Edinburgh, 6th February 1826.

"My Dear Morritt, — It is very true I have been, and am, in danger of a pecuniary loss, and probably a very large one, which, in the uncertainty, I look at as to the full extent, being the manly way of calculating such matters, since one may be better, but can hardly be worse. I can't say I feel overjoyed at losing a large sum of hard-earned money in a most unex-

* *Up with the bonnets of Bonnie Dundee.*

pected manner, for all men considered Constable's people secure as the Bank; yet, as I have obtained an arrangement of payment convenient for everybody concerned, and easy for myself, I cannot say that I care much about the matter. Some economical restrictions I will make; and it happened oddly that they were such as Lady Scott and myself had almost determined upon without this compulsion. Abbotsford will henceforth be our only establishment; and during the time I must be in town, I will take my bed at the Albyn Club. We shall also break off the rather excessive hospitality to which we were exposed, and no longer stand host and hostess to all that do pilgrimage to Melrose. Then I give up an expensive farm, which I always hated, and turn all my odds and ends into cash. I do not reckon much on my literary exertions — I mean in proportion to former success — because popular taste may fluctuate. But with a moderate degree of the favour which I have always had, my time my own, and my mind unplagued about other things, I may boldly promise myself soon to get the better of this blow.

"In these circumstances, I should be unjust and ungrateful to ask or accept the pity of my friends. I, for one, do not see there is much occasion for making moan about it. My womankind will be the greater sufferers, — yet even they look cheerily forward; and, for myself, the blowing off my hat in a stormy day has given me more uneasiness.

"I envy your Brighton party and your fine weather. When I was at Abbotsford, the mercury was down at six or seven in the morning more than once. I am hammering away at a bit of a story from the old affair of the *diablerie* at Woodstock in the Long Parliament times. I don't like it much. I am obliged to hamper my fanatics greatly too much to make them effective; but I make the sacrifice on principle; so, perhaps, I shall deserve good success in other parts of the work. You will be surprised when I tell you that I have written a volume in exactly fifteen days. To be sure, I permitted no interruptions. But then I took exercise, and for ten days of the fifteen attended the Court of Session from two to four

hours every day. This is nothing, however, to writing Ivanhoe when I had the actual cramp in my stomach; but I have no idea of these things preventing a man from doing what he has a mind. My love to all the party at Brighton — fireside party I had almost said, but you scorn my words — seaside party then be it. Lady Scott and Anne join in kindest love. I must close my letter, for one of the consequences of our misfortunes is, that we dine every day at half-past four o'clock; which premature hour arises, I suppose, from sorrow being hungry as well as thirsty. One most laughable part of our tragic comedy was, that every friend in the world came formally, just as they do here when a relation dies, thinking that the eclipse of *les beaux yeux de ma cassette* was perhaps a loss as deserving of consolation.

"We heard an unpleasant report that your nephew was ill. I am glad to see from your letter it is only the lady, and in the right way; and I hope, *Scotticè loquens*, she will be worse before she is better. This mistake is something like the Irish blunder in Faulkner's Journal, 'For *his* Grace the Duchess of Devonshire was safely delivered — read *her* Grace the Duke of Devonshire, &c.' — Always yours affectionately,

"WALTER SCOTT.

"P. S. — Will you do me a favour? Set fire to the Chinese stables; and if it embrace the whole of the Pavilion, it will rid me of a great eye-sore."

"*To Lady Davy*, 26 *Park Street, London.*

"6th February 1826.

"My Dear Lady Davy, — A very few minutes since, I received your kind letter, and answer it in all frankness, and, in Iago's words, 'I am *hurt*, ma'am, but not killed' — nor even kilt. I have made so much by literature, that, even should this loss fall in its whole extent, and we now make preparations for the worst, it will not break, and has not broken, my

sleep. If I have good luck, I may be as rich again as ever; if not, I shall have still far more than many of the most deserving people in Britain — soldiers, sailors, statesmen, or men of literature.

"I am much obliged to you for your kindness to Sophia, who has tact, and great truth of character, I believe. She will wish to take her company, as the scandal said ladies liked their wine, little and good; and I need not say I shall be greatly obliged by your continued notice of one you have known now for a long time. I am, between ourselves, afraid of the little boy; he is terribly delicate in constitution, and so twined about the parents' hearts, that —— But it is needless croaking; what is written on our foreheads at our birth shall be accomplished. So far I am a good Moslem.

"Lockhart is, I think, in his own line, and therefore I do not regret his absence, though, in our present arrangement, as my wife and Anne propose to remain all the year round at Abbotsford, I shall be solitary enough in my lodgings. But I always loved being a bear and sucking my paws in solitude, better than being a lion and ramping for the amusement of others; and as I propose to slam the door in the face of all and sundry for these three years to come, and neither eat nor give to eat, I shall come forth bearish enough, should I live to make another avatar. Seriously, I intend to receive nobody, old and intimate friends excepted, at Abbotsford this season, for it costs me much more in time than otherwise.

"I beg my kindest compliments to Sir Humphry; and tell him Ill Luck, that direful chemist, never put into his crucible a more indissoluble piece of stuff than your affectionate cousin and sincere well-wisher, WALTER SCOTT."

I offer no cold comments on the strength of character which Sir Walter Scott exhibited in the crisis of his calamities. But for the revelations of his Diary, it would never have been known to his most intimate friends, or even to his own affectionate children, what struggles it

cost him to reach the lofty serenity of mind which was reflected in all his outward conduct and demeanour.

As yet, however, he had hardly prepared himself for the extent to which Constable's debts exceeded his assets. The obligations of that house amounted, on a final reckoning, to £256,000; those of Hurst and Robinson to somewhere about £300,000. The former paid, ultimately, only 2s. 9d. in the pound; the latter about 1s. 3d.

The firm of James Ballantyne and Co. might have allowed itself to be declared bankrupt, and obtained a speedy discharge, as the bookselling concerns did, for all its obligations; — but that Sir Walter Scott was a partner. Had he chosen to act in the manner commonly adopted by commercial insolvents, the matter would have been settled in a very short time. The creditors of Ballantyne and Co. — (whose claims, including sheafs of bills of all descriptions, amounted to £117,000) — would have brought into the market whatever property, literary or otherwise, he at the hour of failure possessed; they would have had a right to his liferent at Abbotsford, among other things — and to his reversionary interest in the estate, in case either his eldest son or his daughter-in-law should die without leaving issue, and thus void the provisions of their marriage-contract. All this being brought into the market, the result would have been a dividend very far superior to what the creditors of Constable and Hurst received; and in return, the partners in the printing firm would have been left at liberty to reap for themselves the profits of their future exertions. Things were, however, complicated in consequence of the transfer of Abbotsford in January 1825. At first, some creditors seem to have had serious thoughts of contesting the validity of that trans-

action; but a little reflection and examination satisfied them that nothing could be gained by such an attempt. But, on the other hand, Sir Walter felt that he had done wrong in placing any part of his property beyond the reach of his creditors, by entering into that marriage-contract without a previous most deliberate examination into the state of his responsibilities. He must have felt in this manner, though I have no sort of doubt, that the result of such an examination in January 1825, if accompanied by an instant calling in of all *counter-bills*, would have been to leave him at perfect liberty to do all that he did upon that occasion. However that may have been, and whatever may have been his delicacy respecting this point, he regarded the embarrassment of his commercial firm, on the whole, with the feelings not of a merchant but of a gentleman. He thought that by devoting the rest of his life to the service of his creditors, he could, in the upshot, pay the last farthing he owed them. They (with one or two paltry exceptions) applauded his honourable intentions and resolutions, and partook, to a certain extent, in the self-reliance of their debtor. Nor had they miscalculated as to their interest. Nor had Sir Walter calculated wrongly. He paid the penalty of health and life, but he saved his honour and his self-respect:—

"The glory dies not, and the grief is past." *

As soon as Parliament met, the recent convulsion in the commercial world became the subject of some very remarkable debates in the Lower House; and the Ministers, tracing it mainly to the rash facility of bankers in

* This fine line is from a sonnet on Sir Walter Scott's death, by the late Sir Egerton Brydges.

yielding credit to speculators, proposed to strike at the root of the evil by taking from private banks the privilege of circulating their own notes as money, and limiting even the Bank of England to the issue of notes of £5 value and upwards. The Government designed that this regulation should apply to Scotland as well as England; and the northern public received the announcement with almost universal reprobation. The Scotch banks apprehended a most serious curtailment of their profits; and the merchants and traders of every class were well disposed to back them in opposing the Ministerial innovation. Scott, ever sensitively jealous as to the interference of English statesmen with the internal affairs of his native kingdom, took the matter up with as much zeal as he could have displayed against the Union had he lived in the days of Queen Anne. His national feelings may have been somewhat stimulated, perhaps, by his deep sense of gratitude for the generous forbearance which several Edinburgh banking-houses had just been exhibiting toward himself; and I think it need not be doubted, moreover, that the *splendida bilis* which, as the Diary shows, his own misfortunes had engendered, demanded some escape-valve. Hence the three Letters of Malachi Malagrowther, which appeared first in the Edinburgh Weekly Journal, and were afterwards collected into a pamphlet by the late Mr. Blackwood, who, on that occasion, for the first time, had justice done to his personal character by "the Black Hussar of Literature."

These diatribes produced in Scotland a sensation not, perhaps, inferior to that of the Drapier's letters in Ireland; a greater one, certainly, than any political tract had excited in the British public at large since the ap-

pearance of Burke's Reflections on the French Revolution. They were answered most elaborately and acutely in the London Courier (then the semi-official organ of Lord Liverpool's Government) by Sir Walter's friend, the secretary of the Admiralty, Mr. Croker, who, perhaps, hazarded, in the heat of his composition, a few personal allusions that might as well have been spared, and which might have tempted a less good-natured antagonist to a fiery rejoinder. Meeting, however, followed meeting, and petition on petition came up with thousands of signatures; and the Ministers erelong found that the opposition, of which Malachi had led the van, was, in spite of all their own speeches and Mr. Croker's essays, too strong and too rapidly strengthening, to be safely encountered. The Scotch part of the measure was dropt; and Scott, having carried his practical object, was not at all disposed to persist in a controversy which, if farther pursued, could scarcely, as he foresaw, fail to interrupt the kindly feelings that Croker and he had for many years entertained for each other, and also to aggravate and prolong, unnecessarily, the resentment with which several of his friends in the Cabinet had regarded his unlooked-for appearance as a hostile agitator.

I believe, with these hints, the reader is sufficiently prepared for resuming Sir Walter's Diary.

END OF VOL. VII.

WATCH
WELL